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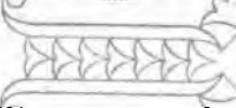
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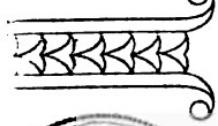


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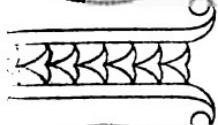


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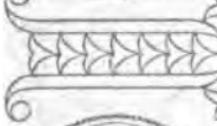
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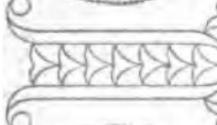
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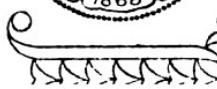
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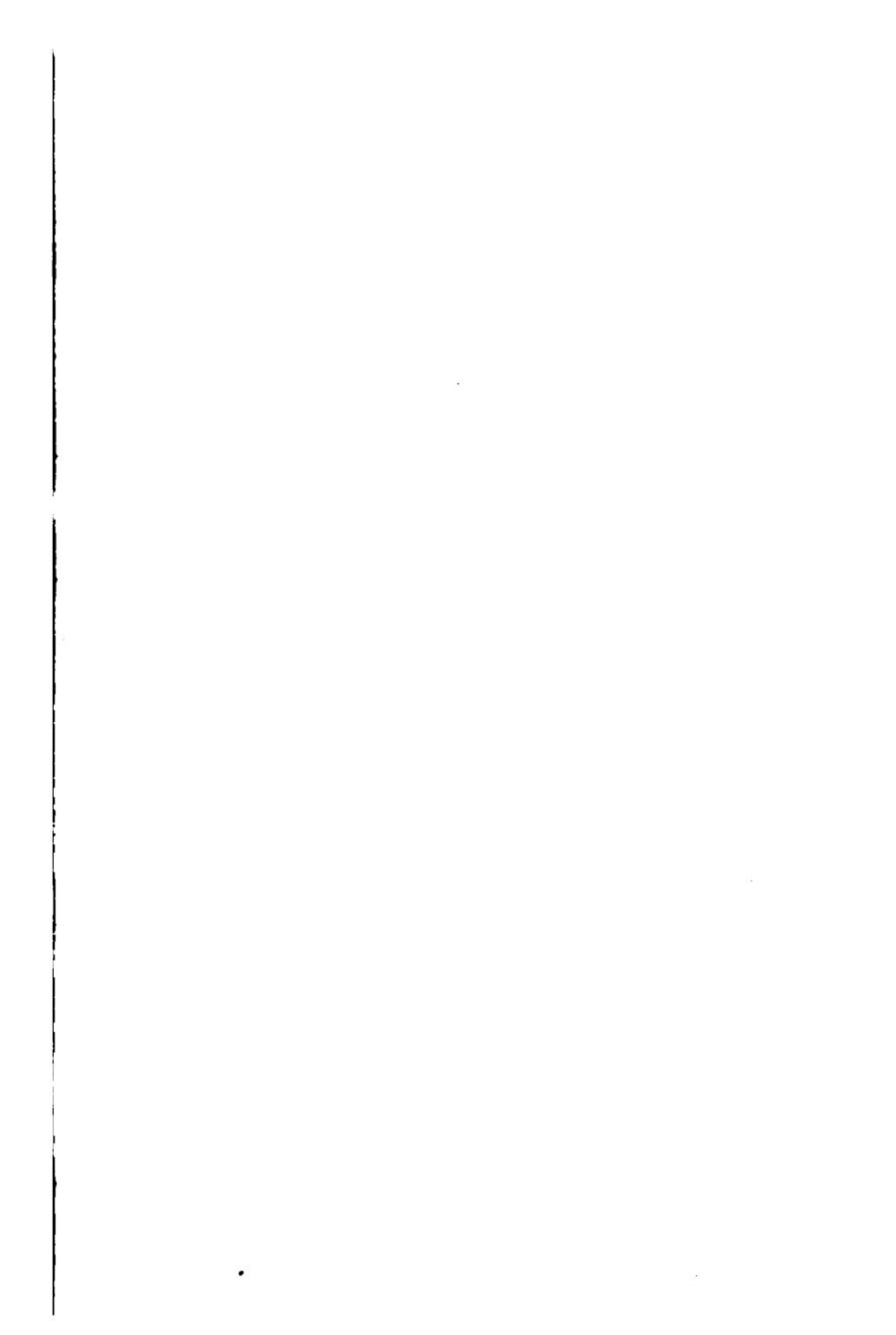


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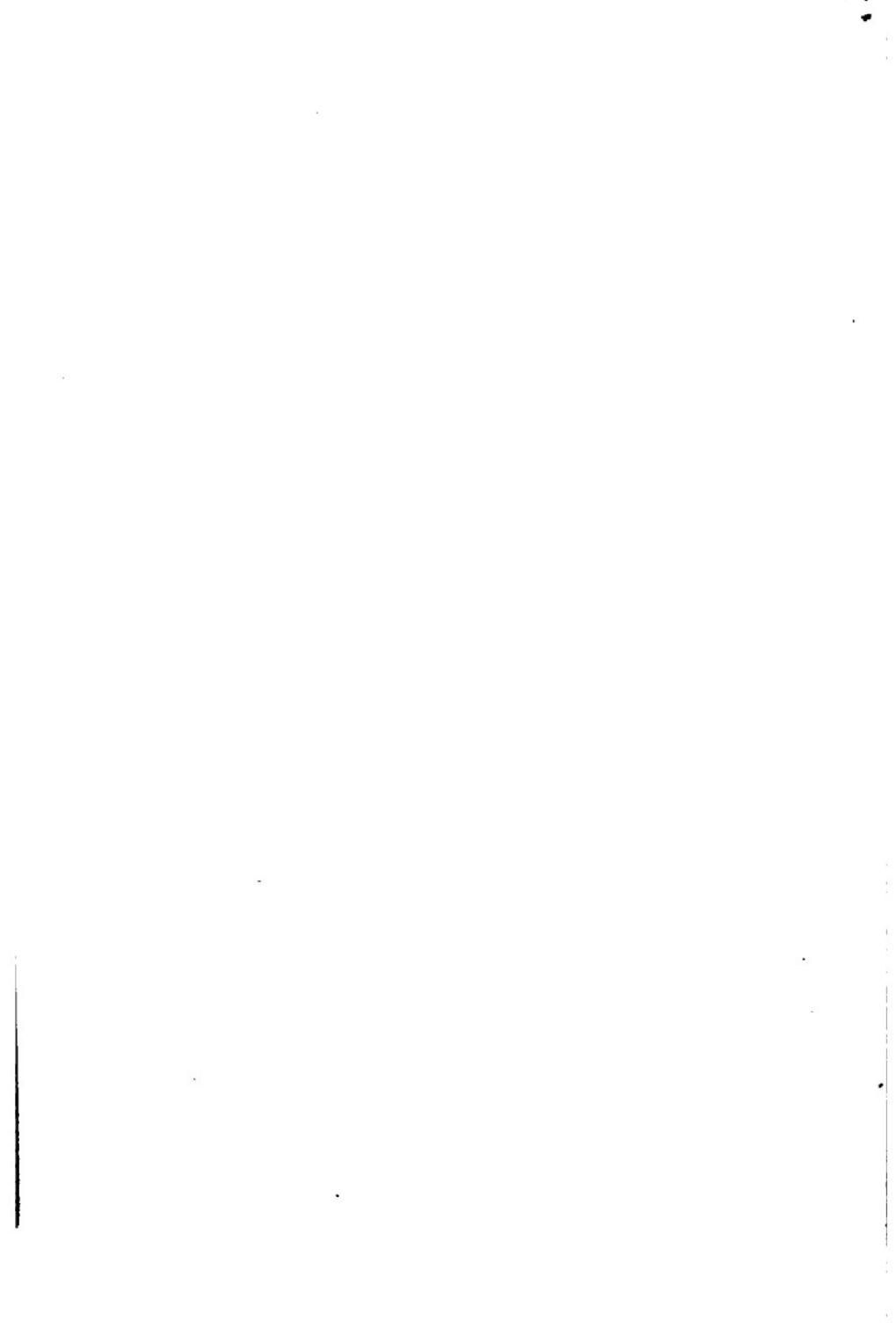
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FROM THEIR POINT OF VIEW



FROM THEIR POINT OF VIEW

BY

M. LOANE

AUTHOR OF

"THE QUEEN'S POOR" "THE NEXT STREET BUT ONE"

ETC.

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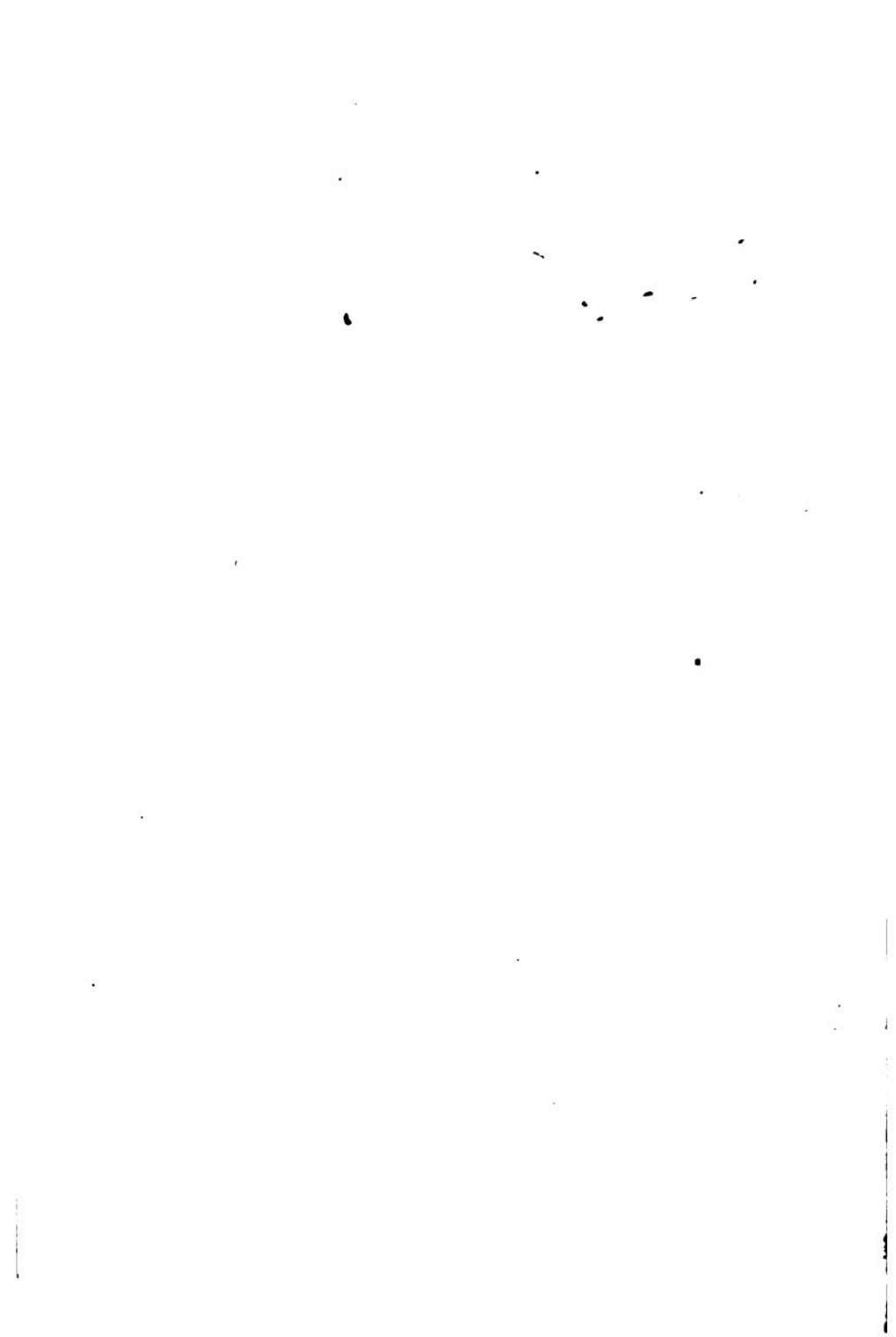
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FROM THEIR POINT OF VIEW

I

THE MANUFACTURE OF THE TRAMP

We hear much of the State encouragement of the tramp, and of various economic causes for his existence and multiplication, but few people realise to what a large extent he is a purely domestic manufacture. Owing to needless injuries inflicted upon them by rough and ignorant handling, innumerable boys are destined from the earliest moments of their separate existence to nothing better than the lowest forms of casual labour. Others are handicapped by neglect of personal defects, curable in early life but allowed to turn into hopeless disabilities; while many suffer from unsuitable or insufficient feeding, which results in general feebleness and that incapacity for sustained attention or sustained physical effort which

inevitably leads to poverty and seldom stops short of pauperism. Others are ruined by parental ignorance or greed, which permits them to undertake heavy labour when they are only fit for light and varied work. Many a lad, energetic, promising in character and physique, is practically beggared from this cause before he is old enough to understand his own interests. At fourteen he is an eager worker, at sixteen he is anaemic and distorted, at twenty he has given up the struggle and is "on the roads."

And yet more are destined to become tramps owing to general lack of moral training and the too early and complete emancipation from parental control, which often has its root in premature wage-earning, even when of sums totally inadequate for a child's support. In a district where it was rare for any boy to be given a labour certificate before the age of fourteen, I heard a father remonstrated with by a working man of a superior type for allowing his twelve-years-old son to smoke cigarettes openly and constantly. "He pays for 'em ; I don't," was the only reply. It is extremely doubtful whether the child's odd-time earnings amounted to as much as ninepence a week. The next time I met the little fellow, smoking and alone (I had not believed in the genuineness of the taste until then), I tried argument. He peered up

at me, blinking through the vile smoke, and said, with an old-mannish air, "I couldn't get on nohow without my baccy!"

Owing chiefly to the extreme indulgence shown by working-class parents to their children in early life, and especially to the system of bribing them to obedience when their wilfulness becomes intolerable, many of them are completely unable to control their boys by the time they are twelve or fourteen, and are obliged to stand by and see them ignorantly ruin all their prospects in life.

I have known fathers able, willing, and anxious to apprentice their sons to good trades, and the lads have obstinately declined, coveting the precocious independence of an errand boy, or some equivalent occupation leading to nothing. I have known others who have paid the premium for apprenticeship, and managed to keep the boys at the work for six months or a year, and then they have broken away and flatly declined all employment but what their parents call "just enough to keep them off the roads." I recollect one whose parents succeeded in getting him through his apprenticeship, but directly the term was completed he took a situation as a groom in a most undesirable establishment, got into trouble, disappeared, and enlisted, but is far too undisciplined to have the faintest likelihood of rising from the ranks.

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Obedience, like the King's English, can only be learnt in early childhood.

In a very few years' time the attitude of these boys towards their parents will probably be that of an undergraduate whom I heard ask his mother reproachfully, "Why didn't you have me taught music when I was a kid?" "I tried to, my dear, but you disliked it so much that I gave it up. You simply *wouldn't* learn." "Why didn't you smack me till I *did*?"

The tramp becomes extraordinarily plausible, and if young will often impose upon even the most experienced persons. I was given a somewhat ludicrous instance of this by near relatives of the boy in question. His age was fourteen, he was the son of a well-to-do tenant farmer, and had been a boarder at the County Grammar School for four years, when he ran away and joined fortunes with a London crossing-sweeper, who had never had an hour's instruction and who had been living by his wits almost as far back as his memory reached. The union did not prosper, and, via magistrate and police-court missionary, they found themselves on board a training ship supported by voluntary contributions. The crossing-sweeper, a clever lad, eagerly grasping his first real chance, made rapid progress in reading and writing; but the rate at which he acquired these and other arts was slow

indeed when compared with that of the grammar-school boy, who had professed to be equally illiterate. At first everyone was delighted by his intelligence, but stimulated and excited by praise, the lad presently forgot all caution, and "learnt" at such a rate that the chaplain's suspicions were aroused, and after a lengthy interview he extorted the addresses of the neglected orphan's parents and schoolmaster. From the point of view of plain honesty, I cannot profess to understand the course that the chaplain then took: he advised the parents to allow the lad to remain where he was, and they did so. He afterwards attained a position as good as his father's, and probably to this day he figures, under the disguise of initials and stars, as a stimulating example to tardy subscribers "of what can be done with even the apparently hopeless wastrel of a London slum."

Not only the boys are allowed to throw away all their opportunities by this unchecked wilfulness and impatience of control; I could give numberless instances of girls permitted to do the same. In their case the first result is weakened health, and the ultimate result to many is something still worse. A year ago a lady required an extra servant for light household duties, and chose a fine, strong, well-grown girl of fifteen, whose parents were extremely poor and had a large dependent

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family. Some weeks before this the mother, finding the girl very troublesome, had bribed her to good behaviour by promising her a two-days' visit to some relatives who lived in a town thirty miles off. The time fixed for the treat fell due when she had been one day in her place, and nothing would induce her to postpone the pleasure, though the mother even offered her a new Sunday dress if she would yield. The mistress recognised that fifteen years of indulgence cannot be brought to a dead stop in a moment, and allowed the girl to go, trusting that she would then settle down; but fresh whims soon arose, and she had to send her away. The father suddenly rebelled against supporting a daughter of that age and strength, and gave the mother a week in which to get her a place. At such short notice only a very inferior one could be found, and the girl's whole prospects were spoilt.

An excellent place was found for a splendidly strong and healthy girl of sixteen. Father, mother, and eldest sister all tried in vain to bribe and persuade her to accept it. She refused, and found a situation for herself, where her health broke down in three months. She returned home for a long rest, and then, in direct opposition to her parents' wishes, went to a lodging-house. It was by no means a sensational bad place, as she was well fed

and well housed, but it achieved the ruin of her health.

No one can deny that it is difficult to control children, and particularly difficult for the poor, owing to several of the circumstances of their daily lives, but it is by no means impossible. Quite close to these girls lived another large family, and until they were well above twenty neither son nor daughter was allowed either to take a situation without their parents' full consent or to give it up without their knowledge and permission. If they ventured to give notice on their own account, they were sent back at once with an apology and a request that the notice might be retracted. No more harshness had been exercised in this family than in the others; in fact, harshness as a system breaks down quite as early as bribery, if not earlier. The difference of method and result arose simply from the fact that in one household the parents recognised that it was their duty to protect young people against their own folly, and in the others they did not. The mother's leading principle of education was, "Whatever you undertake to do, you must go on doing, however tired of it you may be," and the measure that she exacted from her children she poured out on them in full abundance. Also she was in the habit of sending off the more troublesome ones to school with the warning:

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"Now, however much the schoolmaster beats you, don't expect me to come and ask him why he did it. I shall only think that you have had about half as much as you deserve." He was rather a severe man, but they suffered far less at his hands than did the sons of outwardly sympathetic mothers.

In the general training of children, it must always be remembered that rooted unwillingness to use the intellect is far more common than sheer physical laziness, and is a more disastrous quality. A person may by nature dislike all muscular effort, or from constitutional reasons may find muscular effort peculiarly costly, and yet if recognising its necessity and wisely economising it, may accomplish far more than the "willing worker. Fast walker with two tons." More men are tramps, and more women are miserable housewives if married, or underpaid slaves if single, because they cannot, or will not, use their brain power, than because they are too lazy for hard bodily labour. The amount of purely unintellectual drudgery diminishes every year, and the demand for intelligent workers increases.

I had one woman patient, a chronic sufferer, who managed to keep house and children in far more perfect order than vigorous neighbours always scrubbing, and mopping, and scouring. I asked her

how she managed to do this, and she replied, "I makes my mind do three parts of it. It isn't so much what I does, but what I stops from having to be did." The words of a middle-class mistress no doubt explain what the woman meant: "I have such a nice, sensible servant now. The last was very good-natured and hard-working, but she would leave a bucket of dirty water on the stairs, tumble over it, spend half an hour cleaning up the mess, and then exclaim, 'Dear me! What a lot of work there is in this house, to be sure!'"

Mental laziness and inertia, combined with a fair amount of physical industry, are to be found in both sexes and in all classes, and the fact needs to be recognised and combated by educationists. I have had probationers "well born, well bred, and moderately learned," who greatly preferred scrubbing mackintoshes and polishing brasses and tins to learning their strictly professional duties. Almost in vain I preached: "Unless you mean to study seriously, unless you intend to give your patients the most perfect care possible, and prepare yourselves at least to undertake the organisation and management of a ward, what right have you to be here? At scrubbing and polishing you will never be worth as much as a charwoman, and it is a lucky charwoman who earns twelve shillings a week all the year through."

I am told that on board merchant ships there is great difficulty in keeping apprentices from attending exclusively to the roughest and hardest part of their duties. They like to boast that they can take a seaman's place and are smart in their work aloft, and fail to understand that by the time they are five-and-twenty they will find that un-educated lads of eighteen or nineteen can do all that kind of thing as well as they, or better.

The captain of an ocean liner told me that during a voyage that lasted over a month the discarded younger son of an English duke had peeled potatoes for the first-class passengers' cook in return for a better breakfast than was provided in the steerage. Drunkards and gamblers are never solicitous about their breakfast. Sheer laziness had been his ruin ; but it was mental, not physical.

I have several times discovered steady, hard-working girls ground down to ceaseless drudgery. I have found them lighter and better places ; but the mental strain of being expected to do the smaller amount of work really well was so great that in a short time they thankfully returned to their former condition. "When there is no work to do, she does not do it ; and when there is, I have to do it myself," explained a young mistress lucidly, astonished that no servant appreciated her high wages, light work, and early hours, when saddled

with the intolerable drawback of being expected "to think what she is doing."

During a prolonged "silly season" a daily paper filled many columns with letters on the domestic-servant problem. There was one oasis of good sense in which a mistress described the virtues and failings of the average servant. The first lieutenant of a very large ship read the letter through carefully, and then said emphatically, "Every single thing that she says is equally true of bluejackets. Hard work, dirty work, unhealthy work, dangerous work, needless work, and they come up smiling; ask them to think, or to carry out a complicated routine, and they loathe it."

Excessive indulgence of children does not even cease with childhood or early youth. A few days ago in a country village, where wages are low and the necessaries of life by no means cheap, I asked, "Who is that man that he can afford to get drunk every night? Where does he work?" "Oh, he don't work anywhere. His wife do keep him. She is an industrious woman, always at it from the first thing in the morning." "She must be a very foolish person if she supplies him with drink." "Oh, his mother do give him *that*."

One of the social causes for the multiplication of tramps is the mistaken preference of short-sighted employers for "cheap labour," or rather by their con-

founding that with low-priced labour. Another is the fact that so many people just above the poverty line have no realisation of the burden thrown upon the community by the existence of such a large and almost entirely unproductive class, and encourage its increase and continuance by their readily bestowed alms ; while the spasmodic charity of those above them in station, and presumably in opportunities of education, is still more to be blamed.

Opponents of literary education and the "educational ladder" are inclined to look upon Council schools as the fruitful parent of tramps. It must be owned that literary education postpones the age of usefulness, but this is a temporary effect, amply compensated for later on. One of the most practically ignorant boys I ever had to deal with had remained at school until he was fourteen and was in the 7th Standard. Although he had lived in the country all his life and both his grandfathers were experienced gardeners, he could not dig, or weed, or cut grass, or plant potatoes, or sow seeds. He professed to like horses, but could not groom or saddle a pony, wash out a stable, or clean harness. He was the eldest of the family, and could not clean boots or knives. The ineptitude of the way he set about his work is simply inconceivable. One day he was told to beat a carpet measuring 15×8 and rather heavy for its size. He tied a rope to a

tree, slipped the rope under the carpet lengthwise, and then wasted twenty minutes trying to tie the loose end of the rope to a second tree with the full weight of the carpet dragging on his arms. Nevertheless, in six months' time he was getting ten shillings a week, and was fairly well worth the money.

I too object to free secondary education, but on different grounds from those commonly brought forward. Whose feet are most likely to be placed upon the rungs of the "educational ladder?" Those of the well-fed, well-clothed, well-housed child, whose parents could easily afford to pay the full cost of his training. In a village where farmers' sons up to the age of twelve or thirteen attended the Council school, I asked an old resident where they were sent later on. "Oh, they generally go to B. for three or four years, or sometimes to G.," naming two grammar schools, the second one being of no small celebrity. A few days later I heard local rejoicings over the honour done to the village, and especially to the village schoolmaster, by a boy who had won a scholarship worth nearly £100. With fragments of Gray's "Elegy" floating through my mind, and doubtful whether or not *nous avons change tout cela*, I made inquiries, and found that the lad was the eldest child of the most prosperous farmer in the district. "There's

always something to be had nowadays if you've got the learnin'," an elderly relative who was "living up" very comfortably told me triumphantly, and then broke off to relate how the boy's uncle had died "worth a pretty penny," and how much his father paid yearly to the railway for carriage of goods. A few weeks before, the old gentleman, in a more pessimistic frame of mind, had protested earnestly, "There's so much talk of edjucation, but I don't see what diffince it do make. Nine years I were on the School Board. No; boys is pretty much what they was." "But at least they are not worse?" "No, no; there isn't a bit of wickedness in 'em but what I can remember in myself. I just lived for destruction and mistifulness. Boys have no hearts at all. They're made like it, and edjucation don't make no diffince."

Free studentships appear to be awarded in an equally strange fashion. "She is idle, and she does not seem specially capable. How did she get the studentship?" I heard a young teacher at a technical school ask her senior. In purely explanatory tones, without the faintest trace of criticism, sarcasm, or displeasure, the latter replied, "Oh, two of her brothers had been free students." Whether the free students suffered from poverty of food, or from previous over-exertion, I cannot say, but half an hour's observation would have

been sufficient to enable any stranger to distinguish them from the paying pupils.

The great fault of the religious and moral education provided for the poor, and at least equally the fault of that provided by themselves, is that it fosters weak-kneed apathy under the name of submission to the will of God. The result of this teaching is shown in all adverse circumstances, but especially in the treatment of the sick. I come across countless perfectly respectable households where, if a patient is once recognised to be seriously ill, all efforts for cure or alleviation not merely flag, but are regarded as impious. Submission, even if only to the ordinance of man, has its place in life, and a very large one ; but for fifty years at least it would be safe to extol almost exclusively the virtues of courage, family pride, and unbending determination.

That civility has any necessary connection with respectability is an error leading to much hypocrisy and misdirection of charitable and even State assistance. The glib tongue, and the plausible tale, and the smooth manner still bring in a fine harvest to their owners. A lady constantly visiting the homes of the poor in a large manufacturing town one winter when there were many "unemployed" and large sums were collected for them, said to me, "The real unemployed, decent, steady men doing

the best they can for their families, will not apply for relief, because they are ashamed to be seen in such society. While they are searching hopelessly for work, or crouching in their bare homes half starved, loafers and drunkards, and worse, are spinning romances and swallowing up all that the charitable public intended for respectable toilers in passing distress."

Owing to the State encouragement of tramps, the strong man looking for work is simply swamped among the crowd of those who cannot work, or cannot work continuously, those who do not know how, and those who will not. Six years ago a man begged employment at an upland farm, and protested that he had walked 180 miles on the high road, and had asked for work at every likely house he had passed, but entirely in vain. The farmer had heard many similar tales, and did not for one instant believe him, but was thankful to have a labourer even if it should only be for a couple of days. At the end of four years, the latest news that I have of him, that man was still in the farmer's employ.

The isolated tramp of mature age must always be difficult to deal with because he lacks the principal springs of action, but a considerable proportion of those who are still young, and especially groups who are related to one another

and have retained enough family feeling to stick together in all their wanderings, could probably be restored to the life of ordinary householders if help of the right kind were given. Eighteen months ago, my attention, though blunted by the sight of a daily average of fifty or sixty tramps and travellers, was attracted by a party which evidently formed one family. The father, a tall, strong man in the prime of life, led the way, carrying a large bundle ; a lad carried a child of three on his back ; a girl wheeled a perambulator containing a baby of under two and a few miscellaneous possessions ; and a dark-eyed, alert-looking woman brought up the rear with two footsore little girls. None of them were in rags, but their clothes all had the unmistakable all-over-alike tint quickly taken by poor materials alternately exposed to rain and sun. Their voices were clear, and they talked freely to one another, whereas the professional tramp has a perennial cold in his throat, a chronic depression, and speaks little except for the purpose of begging. Six hours after they passed me, they attempted to enter a large town, and were stopped by an Inspector of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. In ten seconds he was convinced that they were "out of the ordinary line," and in ten minutes he had learnt their history. The man was a miner, thrown out of

work by a fierce and obstinate strike in the inception and conduct of which he had had little more voice than his youngest child. He lived in a cottage owned by the proprietors of the mine, and received a week's notice to quit. No other house could be obtained ; he sold the furniture for what he could get, and went into lodgings. At a time when their children range from ten months to fifteen years of age, few workmen have any savings worth naming. The entire resources of the family were exhausted in eight weeks, and they set out, all together, in search of work. They had been "on the roads" for twelve months, working when and how they could, begging the rest of their subsistence, and in fine weather sleeping out of doors.

The Inspector tried to get the whole party lodged at the workhouse while he considered what could be done, but for some obscure departmental reason his request was refused. He had no funds at his disposal, but finding that his clients were Roman Catholics, he applied to two priests, who gave him twelve and sixpence, and an Anglican contributed half a crown and some much-needed clothing, and made promises of further help in the way of furniture "if something definite" could be done, and he took lodgings for them for the night and provided a substantial supper. Early next morn-

ing he visited them, and thought it a good augury when he found them all dressed and the children washed and "put straight." He gave the man a note to a large employer of labour living eleven miles away, and gave the woman half a crown to buy food. The man started off at once, with a piece of bread in his pocket, and the woman, "seeing that they had all had a good supper," spent the money on a basket of fish, which she succeeded in retailing for five shillings. The husband waited eight hours to see the master, and then returned faint with hunger and fatigue, but with permission to begin work in three days' time. Inspirited by these specimens of "grit," the Inspector secured a small cottage near the factory, begged all the strictly necessary articles of furniture, and "went bail" for the family at a decent general shop. Paying a surprise visit a few weeks later, he was gratified to find the house clean and tidy, the children at school, and the two elder ones at work, and to receive the woman's joyful assurance, "We're not a penny in debt, and we're getting a nice home together again."

It is easy to declaim against the criminal recklessness of taking six children on the tramp, but more might be said for the family feeling which prompted such a step, and for the parental care which, all through that long year of hardship

and exposure, had managed to keep them in health and decency, and in such a frame of mind that they had all returned to normal life without the smallest conscious effort.

The only sad and embittered workers that I find among the poor are unskilled labourers who are beginning to lose their strength and to realise that there is nothing before them to the end of their days but drudgery, which every added year makes more painful, and galling subordination to the class immediately above them. "At what time do the men come to work?" I asked a lad in a builder's yard. "The gentlemen come at eight and go at five. The others come at seven and go at six, because they've got to clear away and to get things ready." In cases where they work regularly together, the relations between the smart young artisan and the toil-worn labourer are sometimes of an unceremoniously filial nature, but for a man of fifty or more to be at the beck and call of one possibly less than half his age can rarely be anything but a conscious humiliation, and it is felt more deeply when, as is often the case, the labourer belongs by birth and connections to the superior class, and feels that "by rights" he too should have been "given a trade."

Heaven, we are told, is a state of mind, not a locality, and poverty or riches, as a lasting

condition, ultimately depend upon disciplined or undisciplined character and certain mental abilities, above all upon the power of imaginative foresight. The type of mind that leads to pauperism is to be found in every class, and so is that which leads to increased prosperity. In a village where the standard of life and general thriftiness was high, I found a jocular saying current among the cottagers when anyone was suspected of the intention to sacrifice a substantial advantage for a trivial immediate gain, "Oh, you can sell the springs for eighteenpence." The words had originally been uttered by a young married woman who had chopped up a good sofa and used it for firing in preference to begging, borrowing, buying on credit, or going without, four pennyworth of coal.

II

FAMILY LIFE AMONG THE POOR

THE highest type of home training among the poor, its strong and its weak points, have nowhere been better described than in *Sartor Resartus*. “If good Passivity alone, and not good Passivity and good Activity together, were the thing wanted, then was my early position favourable beyond the most. . . . On the other side, however, things went not so well. My Active Power was unfavourably hemmed in, of which misfortune how many traces yet abide with me! In an ordinary house, where the litter of children’s sports is hateful enough, your training is too stoical; rather to bear and forbear than to make and do. I was forbid much: wishes in any measure bold I had to renounce. . . . It was too rigorous, too frugal, compressively secluded, every way unscientific. Yet in that very strictness and domestic solitude might there not lie the root of deeper earnestness, of the stem from which all noble fruit must grow.

Above all, how unskilful soever, it was loving, it was well-meant, honest; whereby every deficiency was helped." For the tender and just memory of actualities shown in these few sentences, the author may well be forgiven innumerable pages of empty rant. Adam Smith, in words as applicable to the present day as to the period when they were written, justifies on practical grounds the austere code of morality on which these homes are based: "A single week's thoughtlessness and dissipation is often sufficient to undo a poor workman for ever."

Homes such as Carlyle pictured are to be found among superior wage-earners of all descriptions, from the dockyard-man and the agricultural labourer up to the foreman getting perhaps as much as two hundred a year. One great drawback to the rigidity of the system is that if it fails with individual members of the family, it fails very badly indeed; and another is the extreme isolation in which such households live and the general unneighbourliness of their conduct, unless they should happen to belong to some evangelical and militant sect. The chief virtue that can be shown by lads and lasses at school or in workshops is not, "They choose their friends well," but "They never pick up with no one."

A mother of this type was relating to me the

life and death of a son who had died about ten years previously, aged nine, and the culminating point of her eulogy was, "He always kep' to hisself. He never bringed no boys round the house." Poor little soul ! he must at least have had his moments of imaginative rebellion, for the sin of his life, from his mother's standpoint, was his telling her once—once only !—that he "would go for a soldier."

In these homes there is often an extreme narrowness of outlook, and the members are not seldom as indifferent to public affairs as the donkey in the fable who refused to run away when told that the enemy were in sight. On my telling her of a great national disaster, a woman asked in all seriousness, "Will it do any harm to me, miss ? Then why should I care ?" Less austerely respectable persons often possess wider sympathies, and are socially of more value. "If our virtues did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike as if we had them not."

On the whole, the homes of the poor owe most to the mother, but some children would fare badly indeed if it were not for their father's constant protection. I do not mean protection against a bad mother,—for there a man is practically more helpless than a woman who has given her children a bad father,—but protection against a careless one. A minister's wife in the north of

England told me that she was passing a workman's house one afternoon and heard such a shrill and persistent wail of, "What'll Willy say? Oh—h—" that she opened the door and walked in. Mother and grandmother sat helplessly wringing their hands, and lying motionless on the stone floor in a pool of water was something that in colour and shape looked like an enormous rat. It was the eighteen-months-old baby, which, while the clothes were being hung out in the back garden, had fallen into a huge tub of dirty water. To all appearance it was dead, but the minister's wife sent for a doctor, and with no assistance but the continued wail, "What'll Willy say?" stripped off the sodden clothing and set to work to try and restore respiration and circulation; and in two hours' time the child was sitting up, pale and exhausted, but otherwise little the worse for its sufferings. She gathered that the absent Willy had frequently had cause to "say" a great deal, and, in spite of tearful entreaties, hardened her heart sufficiently to leave the two negligent guardians with the threat that unless they told him that night what had happened, she should tell him herself the next morning.

The lion does not paint the picture, and the men of the wage-earning classes suffer under the general imputation of being bad husbands and

fathers, a character only true of a minority among them, and a continually decreasing minority. Not long ago an almost middle-aged doctor told me, as if it were a never-before-heard-of thing, "Just imagine what a good fellow that Simpson is. He always lights the fire and gets his own breakfast before he goes to work."

The usual course, when the husband has to start earlier than seven to his work and there are young children, is that, in addition to attending to his own wants, he should carry up a cup of tea to his wife, and put the big family kettle on, so that there will be plenty of hot water by the time she comes downstairs. The husband is rarely relieved from this duty until he has a son or a daughter old enough to take his place, and not always then. I accidentally found out, however, that one little girl of barely nine was expected to prepare breakfast for her father at 6.30 even in the winter. "I can't read the clock," she told me, "but father showed me the way the hands is when it's time to get up and light the fire." It was an indication of unusually harsh treatment: many far more serious matters soon came to the knowledge of the neighbours, and ultimately she had to be removed from the custody of her parents, a step that can only be justified in extreme cases.

Few indeed are the homes where a child does not lead a happier and more natural life, and has not a better chance of turning into a normal human being, fitted to take a brave part in the world as it is, and as it is very likely to remain, than in any institution that has yet been seen. Before aiming a single blow at home life, let us consider the matter, and ask, What have we to put in its place? Has the State been so successful as foster-mother to orphan, deserted, and "criminal" children, that she is justified in wishing to displace any but the lowest and worst of parents?

A woman whose age is now very little over thirty gave me a most pathetic account of her life in one of the workhouse barrack-schools, and the grief caused her by the sudden and entire separation from her two younger brothers. The children had frequently risked, and sometimes incurred, severe corporal punishment by speaking to one another through some railings which divided the boys' part of the building from the girls'. Needless to say, the rule that they broke had been made for other reasons than the desire to separate orphan brothers and sisters aged eleven, nine, and seven; but it is the kind of thing that happens when human lives are regulated on a large scale and by persons capable of remarking, as one man did to whom I related the tale, "Of course there

ought to have been a solid wall." "But it was better before we left, much better," she concluded simply; "brothers and sisters could meet once a month."

However well State or charitable homes may begin, they all slip into institutionalism. I remember one which in ten years sank from a place where the children as far as possible lived the same life as among superior cottagers—helped in the house work, minded the baby, were sent on errands to the shops, and ran to school chattering and laughing with their little neighbours—into one where no child under twelve did a stroke of work and those under fifteen did very little, and where the girls were compelled to walk to school two and two in absolute silence, and were caned before the whole house if they were convicted of exchanging a single word on the road. As to the value of the superintendence exercised by the Committee, it was so perfunctory that a confirmed drunkard was in charge of the Home for a considerable period, her habits being concealed by the exertions of her assistant and by the strange loyalty that children will show to almost anyone who is not systematically unkind to them. At last a widower father, who had been induced to pay five shillings a week in order that his little daughter might be "properly taught and looked

after," called at the house while the assistant was out and asked to see the matron. The frightened child who answered the door declared that no one was in. "Nonsense!" said the man. "Thirty young girls can't be left alone in a house; and if they are, they didn't ought to be." He marched into the sitting-room, and found the matron lying on the floor speechlessly drunk. Naturally, he went straight to the Secretary, and there was a general exposure and more careful inspection, but no radical alteration in the system.

In another "Home," where the children were "specially trained for domestic service," the sisters, women of gentle birth and breeding, cleaned their own boots, and their pupils (most of whom had been with them from infancy) were sent out into the world so entirely ignorant of any of the conventional differences between the treatment of mistress and maid that one of them, having been shown silver fish knives and forks and told to place them on the dining-room table, immediately laid them in the kitchen also for herself and her fellow-servant.

Intense selfishness is fostered by institutional life; the affections are in no way drawn out or trained, and are in danger of withering away. A teacher at a large school for fatherless girls told me: "The children have everything they

can possibly want, and are far better fed than in the majority of middle-class schools ; and they know, because most of them go home for their holidays, that their mothers have to work hard and count every penny ; and yet scarcely a letter passes through my hands in which the girls do not beg for money—which is generally sent.” She also complained that friendship, and loyalty, and all desire to protect one another were extremely rare among them, and said that the following story is characteristic of their usual conduct. A girl of eleven, who had been noisy and troublesome, was locked by herself in the day-room while the rest of her class were marshalled to their dormitory. The teacher intended fetching her in a quarter of an hour, but forgot all about it, and as she slept in another room, and had only taken charge during the temporary absence of the children’s real mistress, there was nothing to remind her of the occurrence. When the absent teacher returned at 9.30 and went to the dormitory she did not miss the child, and turned the lights out as usual. All the girls knew that one of their number, and almost the youngest, was left alone in the day-room, but none of them spoke. They disliked the teacher who had given the punishment, and were far more anxious to get her into trouble with the superintendent than to rescue

their little companion from cold, and darkness, and possible terror. Happily, the child was free from nerves, had rolled herself up in the table-cloth, and slept peacefully all night. Attempts were made to convince five or six of the elder girls that they had behaved with mean spitefulness and great cruelty, but they seemed entirely conscienceless because without natural affection. Children can only proceed from the particular to the general; they must realise the pain of hurting those they love before they can rise to any conception of their duty to their neighbours as a whole.

Even when many years have been spent in more normal surroundings, the average child is quickly tainted by the prevailing spirit of shirking and selfishness. A girl of twelve, who had been boarded out in the country for a considerable time, was then sent to a town Home, to remain there until she was ready for service. I asked her if she had been sorry to leave the country, and she replied with fervour, "Oh, I like the 'Ome *much* best!" "I thought most little girls loved the country. Were not the people kind to you?" "Oh yes, but at the 'Ome you don't have to do no work."

Often one reads in the printed reports of schools and refuges, "Ninety-five per cent. of the children

bear excellent characters." Considered exclusively as individual workers this may be true, though I remember being told by a person who had unwillingly signed some such statement, "All the boys who die and all who disappear are put on the credit side of the sheet." But the complete test of fitness for life does not come until they are heads of households. Will they have a genius for family life?—for they have certainly no experience to guide them. If a boy from a workhouse school married a girl from an orphanage, the menage would excite the curiosity of a James the First.

If we really loved justice, we should be no more anxious to take other people's responsibilities upon our shoulders than to fling our peculiar burdens upon the first weakly charitable person we met. I have always tried to work upon the principle of family responsibility, and have carried it out with regard to the most distant members when necessary. I once attended at a house where the youngest child, aged seven, had a bad attack of enteric fever. The mother was poor, but most anxious to do everything that she could without resort to charity. I asked her to buy a mackintosh sheet, and told her that the price would be 3s. 6d. Lines of anxiety appeared on her face, for the amount was between a fifth

and a sixth of the week's wages. "How many brothers and sisters have you in this town?" I inquired. "Seven," was the totally unexpected reply, for she was past forty-five, and the population as a whole shifted rapidly. "Suppose you ask each of them to give you sixpence? I am sure they will not refuse if you explain what a benefit it will be to their little niece, and how much it will lighten your own labour." In thirty-six hours the mackintosh was bought and paid for, and a very wide circle had learnt its cost and its value as a nursing accessory, while the mother had been comforted and gratified by the readiness of her own relatives to help her in a time of exceptional need.

The most essential drawback to emigration, and even migration, is the injury done to family life. In a recent book, *At the Works*, the writer seems to be of opinion that a family is necessarily limited to one household, and that every married woman who cannot afford paid service for herself and her infant children has nothing to depend upon when incapacitated by illness but the charity of the upper classes. I have known towns where family life embraced six or more households, and services of all kinds were constantly and freely interchanged. Was it washing-day at Aunt Susan's? Very well, the children repaired to Aunt Mary

at dinner-time with no further explanation than "Mother's busy, and we're so hungry." Was Uncle Tom convalescing, "and that arritable the boys darsn't come a-nigh him"? Then grandmother would have them "and welcome." Even in towns such as described by Lady Bell friendships are soon formed that are scarcely less fruitful in kindness than blood relationships. Even the most undesirable neighbour, whose house half the women in the street have vowed—with good reason—never to enter again, has no lack of help when the hour of stress arrives. In fact, the only persons I have ever found lonely or deserted are the too rigidly exclusive and "stand-offish." They, indeed, may "perish in their pride" while kindly neighbours hold urgency meetings not ten yards away, each trying to induce the other to "put herself forward," and no one among them having sufficient courage to break down invisible barriers.

Like the rich, but to a less degree, the poor waste nearly half the strength and sweetness of family life by a tendency to ignore all relationships but those on the mother's side—a tendency, by the way, which in all classes of life may be curiously modified by the indirect results of the Deceased Wife's Sister's Bill.

Too much pity is often expended on poor women because they have to do house work when they are

ill ; but in these circumstances the average husband will always do the roughest part of it, besides lowering his usually modest demands as to cooking, cleanliness, and punctuality. With regard to the remainder of the work, it is a blessing in very transparent disguise ; no woman is so much to be pitied as the one who, ailing in health and uncultivated in mind, is set free from all necessity for manual labour.

Even a well-built and comfortably arranged house often injuriously affects the health of women not educated up to the point of benefiting by it. To have to open her kitchen door fifty times a day in all weathers and walk five steps in the open air to her wash-house may be a real advantage to the woman who never dreams of going for a walk. The darkness of many cottage living-rooms compels people to sit with open doors who would not open a window, and I have heard that when properly built walls and roofs were first supplied in certain villages in Scotland, the immediate result was a terrible increase of consumption. We rashly forget that society is a living organism of almost infinite complexity, and that a change of surroundings demands a corresponding change in habits.

One of the incidental advantages of early marriages is that the grandparents are still comparatively young and strong ; not only do they

need no help from their children, but can give them a great deal of valuable assistance. Within an hour I was speaking to two very poor women. One said regretfully, "I couldn't never do as much for my children as I should of liked, 'specially in the way of taking of them out o' doors. You see, my mother died not long after I was married. She was over forty when I was born, so it was much the same tale with her ; but then she on'y had me and my two brothers, so it didn't seem to matter so much. And then father was a much handier man in the house than what my husband is." The other, resentful of some chance criticism, said angrily, "It's all very well for Mrs. Cripps to talk of what she does. She's got a mother to help her, and a sister, and her old father will mind her little boys by the hour when he's down at the allotments."

Lady Bell had also picked up a curiously inaccurate idea that an old father is a more welcome inmate of his married children's house than an old mother, and that it is because he is less critical and captious and easier to get on with. As a matter of fact, no one has his critical faculties more sharpened and is more relentless and unrestrained in the expression of his judgments than an unoccupied old man. If either parent is welcome in the house, it is the mother ; and in most cases I fear that the wife would prefer the constant presence of her

mother-in-law to that of her aged father. This is not only because the woman is less exacting and makes less work, and even if in feeble health can give household help in a hundred small ways; it is because of the intolerance that often exists between one generation and another when domestic manners and customs are changing as rapidly as they are at the present day among the progressive working classes, and because a woman adapts herself more readily and is never left so far behind in the struggle for morality and refinement. It is not a mere aping at gentility that makes the rough old grandfather unwelcome; there are often moral reasons too grave to be spoken of in detail. The parents are trying to raise their children's whole standard of life and thought and speech, and the grandfather—deliberately with regard to what he considers "stuff'n-nonsense," and unconsciously with regard to more serious matters—hampers and thwarts their endeavours. The parents could do what they recognise as their "duty" by either generation, but not within the limits of one small house. The inferiority in moral refinement is, of course, not invariably on the side of the parents; experience of life, natural gifts, and fortunate associations, not seldom combine to make them the superiors of their children; but when this is the case, sons and daughters of mature age rarely

fail to recognise it, and rejoice in it with a proud humility.

Only a few days ago I heard of a widowed mother—a husband's mother—who had entirely revolutionised the slatternly household to which she had retired on a tiny pension. Kitchen and children were soon almost unrecognisable, and the change was effected not so much by her personal work as by her personal influence. Even when she was fifty miles away, son and daughter had lied freely in order to make her think that the babies were cared for as she thought right, and at close quarters she was an irresistible power. There was nothing really bad about the daughter-in-law, but the cottage was isolated, the husband good-natured and indifferent, and the children not yet of school age ; so that there was an unwholesome absence of publicity, criticism, and appreciation.

The dangerous or unhealthy nature of certain occupations, the recklessness with which comparatively safe ones are carried on, and the culpable waste of life in childbirth, bring many marriages to an early close. Poor men and women not only marry again, but *ought* to do so; but a little temporary help to prevent hasty and ever-to-be-regretted unions might be an advisable form of private charity. Widowers with children should if possible marry widows in the same position.

In cases where each has thus given hostages, complaints of harsh or cruel treatment are relatively rare. It is unlikely that the wife will feel such a passionate and absorbing affection for the third family, when it comes, that she will be blinded to all sense of duty to the other two. Virtuous step-parents abound, but they have no history. One woman, youngest of ten by her mother's first marriage, did, however, tell me : "Step-father he never hit one of us no more than he did his own. If ever mother went for to give us a hiding, he'd always take our part."

That men shall spend a certain amount of money in beer, tobacco, and halfpenny newspapers is accepted by most wives as inevitable, but if the same sums are laid out on harmless hobbies, or on books, they are sadly grudged. Even if a husband spends a little extra money in raising vegetables of a superior quality to the "passel o' rubbish" grown by his neighbours, the ordinary wife will say, in tones of melancholy resignation, "Well, it's better than the drink." In cases where the man's education is much superior to the wife's, he conceals his trifling expenditure on intellectual amusements as sedulously as if they were crimes. I have read, and sometimes heard, of men who lavish money on dogs and poultry while wife and children are ragged and half-starved, but I have never come across one. Possibly they bear about the same proportion to

their class as the gambler or the morphiomaniac does among the rich.

I have scarcely ever seen an indoor game of any kind played in the homes of the poor. Cards, draughts, chess, etc., are almost unknown. When they appear, they will be at once the sign and the cause of a great social and moral improvement. At present there is wonderfully little voluntary exertion of mind or body among ordinary wage-earners. This inertia arises, no doubt, in many cases from heavy physical fatigue, but to a great extent it is merely a long-established habit of mind and body which has changed far more slowly than the conditions of labour. To work hard or to do absolutely nothing is almost as general among men who work eight hours a day as it was when they worked twelve. The slowness of the change is partly due to the cramped quarters in which they live. If statistics could be collected of the number of respectable and decently furnished homes possessing living-rooms where not even four persons could sit down to an orderly meal or carry on occupations of the least exacting type, the result would be quite as distressing to all those with properly cultivated imaginations as the statistics relating to what is legally termed over-crowding. Any philanthropic house-builder who really understood the needs and habits of the poor would

provide a wash-house in which it was literally impossible to sit down, a very small front parlour, to be sacrificed—not without much spiritual gain—to gentility, and a roomy kitchen, in which comfort, sociability, and industry were all possible.

The size of rooms is almost as important as their number. Speaking solely with reference to physical health, a family living in one large third-floor room, with a sash window and with a fire almost constantly burning, may be better housed than one with a small ground-floor kitchen and two minute bedrooms with no chimney and windows that cannot be opened without letting in a violent draught, possibly accompanied by driving rain or snow.

If only the poor were discontented ! "Carlyle said a contented mind is a continual feast," said a man who had just been beating my carpets. I did not dispute the authorship of the phrase, but I never lose a chance of disputing the doctrine. "Then why did you beat my carpets ? You were not in real need of the money. Discontent is the cause of all exertion. If your wife were contented, she would not even boil the turnips for your dinner. They can be eaten raw." "Ah," he replied solemnly, "now that just shows there's two ways o' lookin' at things. Carlyle didn't think of that."

The poor have been taught cleanliness for

centuries, and they know a great deal about it, and often practise it against fearful odds : if they could in addition learn a little punctuality and order, the labour entailed by cleanliness, and its temper-souring qualities, would be reduced to a minimum. Meals are postponed indefinitely so that "cleaning" can be finished ; and then, for want of door-scrapers and door-mats, and for want also of domestic discipline, the floor is not even dry before it is again dirty. All my sympathies went with an old sailor who said judicially, "I like the house clean—mod'ritly—but we *must* pipe reg'lar to meals."

The least satisfactory feature with regard to the family life of the poor is in the relations between the old and the middle-aged. These faulty relations are painfully complicated, even when not chiefly caused, by money matters, by the claims unhesitatingly made on the one side and grudgingly conceded or refused by the other.

Children owe their parents love, consideration, tenderness, protection, and personal service ; but they do not owe them their daily bread, and in ordinary cases they cannot give it to them without either abjuring matrimony altogether, or by depriving their own children of what it is desirable for them to have, or by indefinitely postponing provision for their own old age—thus repeating the same mistakes over and over again.

Why is the world always to be in arrears? I recently came across a very steady man and his wife, earning about twenty-seven shillings a week. They belonged to a sick club and a burial club, but apparently there was no thought of old age; and as they were childless, it seemed peculiarly improvident. I asked the wife for an explanation, and she told me, in her strangely inverted phraseology: "Their daughter does for them, but my husband and his brother has to support their mother'n father between 'em." The injustice in this case was a double one, for the father had been a skilled artisan and had earned high wages until over sixty years of age, but neither of the sons had been given a trade, and the daughter had married a labourer.

The number of children who remain single in order to support a widowed mother or disabled father is surprisingly large, and the results are invariably bad. When the break-up of the home comes at last, the son, as a middle-aged or even elderly man, marries, and begins the task of bringing up a family,—"rocking a cradle with spettaculs," as one indignant cottager expressed it,—while the daughter dies worn out with fatigue, or ends her days in the Union.

I remember one instance where a daughter after working for her father and almost entirely

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maintaining him for nearly twenty years, was left broken in health and with the choice before her of semi-starvation, the workhouse, or marriage with a cranky widower considerably her senior in age and greatly her inferior in education.

In whatever class of life the parents depend on the children, is the result good? Take the favourite case, thought beautiful by the sentimentalists, the support of a well-born and well-bred woman by her son. Can any man honestly say that the opinion of the parent whose every necessity he has to supply is of the same value in his eyes, is the same restraint and the same stimulus that it would be if she were independent of everything but his respect and affection? I recollect reading a letter written by a man to his totally dependent mother. He was considered a model of filial piety, but any free woman would quickly have called him to account for its arrogance, and then burnt it.

There are undoubtedly workers unable to make even a meagre provision for their old age, but to jump from that fact—by no means among the unchangeable facts of life—to the necessity of providing pensions for everyone, is as rational as taking over the entire care and responsibility of all wage-earners' children because a decreasing minority among them cannot at all times manage

to provide the essentials of healthy life for a large family.

Considerable numbers of my acquaintances among the poorer classes of wage-earners make no attempt to save anything for themselves until their youngest children are self-supporting—and those youngest children are often unconscionably slow!

Everyone has his favourite source from which he would like to dip out a provision for the aged, but the difference between the cost of bringing up the first three and the last three children would well repay inquiry. If the money were spent on solid advantages for them, it would be a different matter; but in the majority of cases it is simply wasted on harmful indulgences.

Supposing the aged to be possessed of a small income, and dropping for the moment all consideration of its origin, where are they likely to be happiest—in an institution, living alone, or with their married children?

Institution life can never be suited to old people other than hopeless invalids, for there cannot be the freedom that is necessary to their comfort, and great hardship is caused by the inevitable inflexibility of the rules.

Should old and feeble parents live with their married children? My experience leads me to reply unhesitatingly that this plan is almost

invariably a failure. Even with the best intentions and a genuine substratum of affection, three generations cannot live peaceably in one crowded house ; and although the parents may be welcomed by son or daughter, what about the son's wife or daughter's husband ?

I knew an excellent woman who, in order to pay her mother's rent and add to the tiny provision left by her father, was wearing herself out as cook-general to employers who " were always very nice and polite, and all that, and thought nothing of money, but—well, they've been in India, and I find people who have been in India are all alike. Although it's such a big house, and no one but me, they won't even feed the dog or fill the flower vases."

I heard later on that the eldest son had offered his mother a home, and remonstrated with the daughter for not inducing her mother to accept. " It's only a sham," she said bitterly. " He does it so that I can't come on him for anything else for mother. He knows well enough that I wouldn't let her go there to be put on by his wife, and worried and cheeked by his noisy, spoilt children—no, not as long as I can stand on my two feet."

The aged poor are infinitely happier if they can keep a home of their own, even a single room ; and it is surprising to witness up to what a great age

it is possible for them to do all their own house work, and how much better they are for the exertion. I have known many old people bed-ridden from sheer dispiritedness, but this never happens when they maintain their independence. I have known many old widows and widowers who, with the moral support of a postcard addressed to the district nurse and ready to be despatched in case of need, have lived safely and contentedly year after year on a pittance less than half of what it would have cost to keep them pinning in a workhouse.

Those who maintain that there is no real and true family life if aged parents cannot find a home with their children, must remember that, owing to early marriages and to the havoc played by death, emigration, and migration, men and women of sixty-five, sixty, or even less, are often as much alone in the world as if they had never been married.

With regard to the general position of the aged poor, I can only say that if they possess a small independence, even one plainly insufficient for their entire support, they receive affection from their children and much kindly and respectful assistance from their neighbours. If totally dependent on others, they have little love from their children, much help and pity from their neighbours,

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and very little respect from anyone. This truth may sound brutal, but the possession of hardly earned and hardly saved money is a strong proof of superior intellect and character, and it is to these that homage is rendered.

The cheerfulness and exultant contentment of the aged poor who have managed to maintain independence even on the most rigorous terms, and the generous wideness of their outlook, are simply admirable. I never can understand how the belief arose that old people are soured, or wrapped up in themselves and their ailments. Men and women who might excusably talk by the hour of their physical sufferings scarcely care to answer my inquiries as to their health, so eager are they to tell me the contents of their newspaper. "Their" newspaper, by the way, is fondly believed to be different in substance as well as wording from everyone else's. If means permitted them to buy several, comparison would result in the belief that they had been scandalously robbed. They also seem to be quite unaware of the liberty of the press, and are usually awestruck by the daring of those who speak disrespectfully of dignities.

There is a curious assumption that in all differences of opinion the view accepted by the lower classes is unvaryingly wrong. For example, we

are convinced that light, air, space, and cleanliness are the chief ingredients of good health. The working classes as a whole are equally certain that among themselves the direst enemy of life, and especially of child life, is cold air. Are they altogether mistaken? In the married quarters of the most modern military barracks, I always found that if a soldier's child caught a severe cold, the only chance of saving its life was in sending round an appeal to all the other Mrs. Atkinses and borrowing their brown emergency blankets. Some we spread on the floor, with others we formed a tent open only towards the fire; and then the child sometimes did as well as in the ordinary stuffy, over-furnished bedroom in workmen's quarters. Doctors were well aware of this, for as they looked round the large, bare, clean, airy room, their invariable request was, "Do try if you can't raise the temperature." When the advantages of air and water are pointed out to my patients, the usual reply is, "Ah, but you've been bred [or sometimes "fed"] up to it. Cold kills us." There is profound truth in this: cold is more deadly to them than any germ yet discovered.

One of the weakest points of home life among the very poor is that the parents seem to have lost, or never to have acquired, the belief that, as far as their abilities permit, they ought in all things to

be their children's teachers. So far from learning in order that they may teach, they do not dream of teaching what they know. A few months ago I asked a woman who bore an excellent reputation for industry and had seven children, ranging from twelve to nearly thirty years of age, and was a fairly good housewife, if her youngest daughter, a girl of seventeen, knew anything of cooking. She replied, "Her mistress have taught her all kinds of house work, but I shouldn't say she knew anything at all of cooking," adding, rather resentfully, "She's never been learned." I found that the girl could not boil an egg, had never done such a thing, and had no idea how to cook potatoes or any other vegetables, nor did she know whether she had better allow one hour, or two, or more, for the process. It very commonly happens that mothers who can wash and get up linen well allow their daughters to remain in complete ignorance of the art, and the same thing is true with regard to cutting out and plain dress-making. Occasionally a mother will say, "I've taught her everything I know," but this is a mark of great superiority, instead of a mere commonplace of maternal duty. I fear that there has been some deterioration in the domestic training given to girls in their own homes. In the same village a handsome woman, who cannot be more than sixty years of age, showed me the largest house but one in the

place, and said, "That is where I went out first as a servant. I was eight years old." "What other servants were there?" "There weren't none but me. I stopped two years." "But what work could you possibly do at that age?" "I could clean the doorstep and wash the floors, and chop wood, and light fires, and rub knives, and clear up after meals. Some washing, too, I could do, and lots of things besides. Girls had to turn out earlier than. I began at eight and I left off at eight-and-twenty." "Did you never go to school?" "Not three weeks in my life—to a day school, that is. I went to Sunday school, and learnt to read. When I was fifteen I went right away to service in London, and that soon learnt me to write! I don't mind using a pen now, not for anyone to see!"

Even the better-educated among the mothers rarely seem to follow up the children's school work or have any idea of co-operating with the teachers. I knew one mother, however, who when her little girl was learning to knit gloves, bought needles and wool, and made the child repeat the day's lesson every evening. I am sorry to add that the girl turned out unsatisfactorily, mainly owing to a lack of affection, self-excused by a grudging sense that she had been more hardly disciplined than her neighbours. Fathers still more rarely attempt to give instruction. I have recently employed a boy of

sixteen, the son of a superior gardener, and he knows no more of his father's trade, and is far less interested in it, than if he were a London errand-boy. Not long ago I had an older lad from a family of carpenters ; he did not know how to use a hammer, was perfectly helpless with a saw, and seemed to have no knowledge of the "nature" of wood, except that it was combustible.

Joint households are perhaps the most distinguishing feature of domestic life among the poor ; there are few homes in which no trace of the system is to be found. It is partly to insufficient recognition of this truth that we owe many newspaper facts as to wages received and rent paid in certain districts, and the simply impossible margin left for food, clothes, and firing. The joint household sometimes represents family life at its highest, and it often gives a stability to the working-class home which it could not otherwise possess, enabling periods of sickness or unemployment to be safely tided over ; but there are other sides to the question, and they are sometimes darkly shaded.

My first introduction to the joint household was in its least attractive form. On an open shelf in a north-country back kitchen which served at once as larder, tool-house, box-room, menagerie, and a place for performing the rougher parts of the house work, I saw, ranged at even distances, five plates,

each with a loaf in cut, and each surrounded by a small group of miscellaneous groceries wrapped in paper. This meant five independent members living under the same roof, paying a share of the rent and a trifling acknowledgment of their mother's services, but in no way receiving the discipline, bearing the burden, or enjoying the pleasures of real home life. The joint household is only tolerable so long as it maintains an accepted head, and each member pays the mother a sum to cover all expenses, and shares in the common meals. When there are three generations in the house, the eldest often lives in this fashion ; but as the old people usually have a separate room and a separate fire, it has not the same unseemliness in their case, and there is the reasonable excuse that the aged and feeble need different food and at different hours from those in their full strength. In addition, the uncontrolled expenditure of their little incomes affords an intensely interesting occupation, deprived of which old people are likely to sink into querulousness or despondency, or to become bedridden from sheer lack of all suitable stimulus.

One of the most common forms of the joint household is where grown-up sons live with elderly parents or a widowed mother. The great drawback to this is that the profits on "doing for them" often form a large proportion of the income

of the older generation, and it becomes the direct interest of the parents to prevent their sons from marrying. All social intercourse with respectable young women of suitable age and disposition is more or less openly checked, and parents who would be astounded if anything were said in disparagement of their system of ethics or religion, allow bachelor sons to live under their roof, giving them every imaginable licence, and well knowing how their freedom is used. This is even done when there are young and impressionable daughters in the house, from whom no attempt is made to conceal the truth. Exceptions are, of course, to be found. I remember one woman who had been genuinely ignorant of the life her son was leading, and, when the facts were suddenly revealed to her, she never rested until she had compelled him to marry a girl he was known to have ruined.

A still larger number of joint households are composed of girls between sixteen and twenty-six working in shops and factories and living with their parents and younger sisters and brothers. The weak point here is that in a large majority of cases the girls are not really earning their full livelihood, and are partly a burden at an age when they ought to be economically independent. Their average earnings frequently do not amount to more than six shillings a week, of which four,

or even less, are given to the mother to provide literally everything except clothes and pocket-money—and occasional demands may be made for these also. Some of the results of this state of affairs were pointed out to me by a shrewd young woman of about thirty, wife of a London printer. "What they pay mostly goes towards the rent. Mothers with two or three girls at home can pay quite a fancy sum, and it runs everyone's rent up in a way you'd never believe unless you'd seen it, as I have. Most of the money they get from them goes for that, and what's left out of 3s. 6d. or 4s. don't hardly begin to feed hungry, sprawling, great girls like that. It just means that they're eating the food away from the little ones, let alone crowding 'em up, and often hunting 'em about and seeming to kind of hate them into the bargain. Sometimes the fathers is sharp enough to see through it, and then there's a row and a clear out, and of course *that* ends in something worse. No one don't want to see young girls drove to live by themselves like savidges, but if they aren't earning enough to pay properly instead of dragging on their fathers, they'd ought to go to service. But that's just what their mothers don't like. They enjoy to feel the money in their hands, however quick they have to part with it. They'll tell you they like to keep their

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girls with 'em, they like 'em to feel they have a home; but it's just greed and foolishness. It's the little ones I pity most—the best food took from them, and everything they has grudged. And then the girls aren't kept in no kind of order at all. They won't do a stroke of house work—they won't even make their own beds—and they often behave in a way the younger ones would be smacked for—and serve 'em right, too. I know one woman who gets up every morning and heats a bucket of water so there's no excuse for her girl not having a good wash, and she goes off to the factory without so much as dipping the end of her nose or the tips of her fingers. Catch me eating no choc'late with *that* label! And there's girls who might live decent, with mothers willing to wash and mend for them, and they'll just clap on their clothes and wear 'em till they *can't* be mended, and their mothers is ashamed to hang 'em on the line. Often they won't take 'em off till they're fit for nothing but to be put straight into the fire. The mothers brought it on theirselves at the beginning, and they put up with it to save the girls from being drove to worse. There's always a worse. That's what holds them from sayin' much to their sons, neither. Nothing's as simple as you'd think, miss; not when you comes to look into it."

Perhaps the most entirely undesirable form of the joint household is where a lodger is admitted who is in no way related to the family. Accustomed to see lodgers and lodgings of a different type, it is difficult for the richer classes to fully realise the undesirability of what seems an easy and profitable form of domestic industry. In their experience, the lodger is commonly the superior of the landlord in means, education, and social position. Among the poor, broadly speaking, the lodger is the inferior of the householder in many important respects. He is usually without capital, often without character, and not seldom dangerously deficient in intellect; and tenants who have taken a larger house than they can afford, trusting to his regular payments, find him a broken reed, while there are methods of wronging the landlord sometimes deadlier and often more exasperating. A childless married woman whom I have known for many years took a lad of nineteen as a lodger. The terms of the "let" were somewhat complicated: he paid 4s. a week, and she was to do his cooking, washing, and mending, and supply him with hot tea twice a day, and he was to sit by the kitchen fire when he chose, the unexpressed condition being that he would exercise a mannerly discretion in such a delicate matter. The rent, rates, and taxes of the

house only amounted to 5s. a week, so that there seemed room for profit—ultimately, that is to say, for his arrival had entailed an expenditure of 18s. on two substantial pieces of second-hand furniture. A few months later my old friend referred to her lodger as the worst bargain she had ever made. “Is he backward with his rent?” I asked. “No, miss; it isn’t that. He’s about as lazy as they make ‘em, but he earns his ten or ’leven shillings a week pretty reg’lar, and I don’t forget to ask him for it of a Saturday, and there isn’t no boldness about him.” “Is he noisy or quarrelsome?” “No, miss; he’s good-natured enough, and he don’t drink nothing worth naming, nor yet smoke, and he’s pretty careful with the furniture—for a lodger, that is.” “Is he getting into bad company?” I asked, at a loss to imagine what objection there could be to such a tame and colourless youth. “Well, miss, it’s this way. It was agreed that he was to set in the kitchen when he chose, but of course we never thought as he wouldn’t have the manners to keep away when we was at meals. But no; sure as ever we’ve got a bit of anything nice and hot, there he’ll stick, and he’ll sniff and he’ll sniff, and stare, and pass remarks, and sigh, till one or the other of us—and I must own it’s oftenest me—will say, ‘Like a bit?’ and then, without no more asking than

you'd give a dog, he pegs into it until what I meant for next day's dinner looks pretty foolish. You understand me, miss: if he was really in need, neither of us wouldn't grudge it to him, seeing that he keeps hisself respectable, and he's got no parents and no home; but he's got no call to live three days on half a sheep's head if he don't want to. There's nothing as I knows on to stop his earning two or three shillings more pretty nearly every week, and yet you *can't* sit there and eat a hot meal with him looking on."

The lodger ought certainly to be confined to the homes of the middle-aged and the elderly, as he is never a desirable companion or example for childhood. In the Blocks his presence is strictly forbidden, and he can only be harboured under the dread penalty of a week's notice to quit; but with obliging neighbours and a folding bedstead there is not much to betray his existence to the Inspector, and perhaps it is some lingering capacity for comfortably established domestic life, and not sheer perversity, which makes him so peculiarly anxious to enter these exclusive circles.

The lodger is almost always a man. Owing to the low rate of women's wages, they are rarely able to pay even the moderate rates demanded by the workman's wife. When possessed of sufficient money, however, they are regarded — and often

with justice—as an unmixed blessing to the land-lady fortunate enough to secure them: early in their hours, punctual in their payments, “improving” for the children, and often actively helpful to the overwrought house-mother. If the day ever dawns when wages of 25s. and 30s. a week are as common among women-workers as 10s. and 12s. are now, “paying guests” will be plentiful, and the difficult problem of earning money in late middle-age and in broken health will be solved. There is a curious prejudice among the rich that *their* expenditure mysteriously supports the working classes, while the expenditure of persons drawing good wages benefits no one but themselves—and that most doubtfully.

Another description of joint households increasingly common in all districts where the demand for labour fluctuates or is rapidly expanding is that formed by two married couples entirely unrelated to one another. The householders are usually the seniors, and generally possess all the furniture; but where the arrangement is of a more permanent nature, the lodgers bring their own belongings and cook by their own fire. In cases where both the men are equally steady, and the children few in number or very young, the plan answers well, and the wives are extremely serviceable to one another. But after a few months

it often happens that the lodger's work and wages come to an end, and then a burden is thrown upon the householders in proportion to the strength of the friendship between the women. It may be several weeks before the lodger decides to move to some other town, and all that time he and his wife are housed and half fed for nothing, while there is small intention of ever paying the arrears, and still smaller expectation of receiving them.

Notwithstanding these experiences, much confidence is shown in immigrants. I have even known the householders go away for ten days' holiday, leaving them in entire charge of all their possessions, and on their return I have heard fewer and more trivial charges brought against them than have often been poured out with reference to judges, generals, and even archdeacons, when left in somewhat similar circumstances.

III

SOME MENTAL AND MORAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POOR

BROADLY speaking, the people who become and remain rich are those who accept all the responsibilities that life brings them, and even seek for more; those who continue, or who become, poor, are those who shirk these responsibilities, those who, almost unknown to themselves, are seeking to shake off some burden which it is for the "safety, honour, and welfare" of their manhood that they should bear; while the philanthropist tries to trim the boat by reproaching the rich, more for their virtues than their sins, and heaping up ingenious temptations for the poor, unable to see that his well-meant endeavours are still further jeopardising the balance. Show me a poor man who accepts all the duties of family life and has interests closely connected with them but reaching out boldly beyond them, and I will show you one who in a very short time will have ceased to be

poor in any distressful or hampering sense of the word, whose children will be well off, and whose grandchildren will be rich. The converse is equally true: let a man, whether unconsciously or of malice aforethought, strive to reduce the claims made on him, cut off all unselfish interests, refuse to meet all social obligations, and the downfall of his family will be rapid and complete.

Many of the mental differences which distinguish the poor from the rich spring from this ethical root. The unwillingness to interfere, to "put oneself forward," are often much stronger than moral sense, or even feelings of humanity and compassion. From a generally worthy and trustworthy woman, a laborious housewife and tender mother, I received such deplorable accounts of a neighbour's treatment of her children that, after checking them by my own observation, I felt obliged to make an appeal to the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty. Instantly my informant's prejudices were aroused, and proved far stronger than her undoubtedly strong feelings of pity for four cruelly neglected boys, the eldest not six years old. Ignoring all her repeated and detailed accusations, she averred sullenly, "Of course I don't know nothin' about it. If I'm asked, I can't say nothin'," and to this she adhered. Unfortunately, the case could speak for itself. An intolerably

nauseous smell reached my nostrils a few days later, and on inquiry as to the cause I was told by a younger and less cautious neighbour, "The N-Spectre has a-been, and he said the children's bedding was to be burnt, and the rags that she calls their clothes."

Class feeling, no doubt, accounted to some extent for the first woman's sudden change of attitude, but the strongest element was a shrinking from responsibility. It would be a mistake to imagine that class feeling and class consciousness are generally accompanied by active dislike ; they are chiefly important because they so heavily discount the value of all benevolent effort working from above. It has often surprised me to observe the tolerance, and even sympathy, with which the public amusements and extravagant personal expenditure of the wealthy are regarded by those in the narrowest poverty. Perhaps self-knowledge, and a consequent lack of excessive self-reverence, may be at the bottom of this charitable disposition. A socialistically inclined friend of mine had been staying in the house of a "self-made" north-country man, and told me : "He has nineteen horses in his stables, and streets full of men who work for him at nineteen shillings a week. What seems to me the worst part is that these men admire him, and would imitate him if they could."

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People who wish to know the effect of their kindly meant visits among the poor would be mortified to know how often the result is pure amusement. They so honestly wished to give instruction, and they have supplied highly appreciated farce. It is always difficult to understand how easy it is to amuse one's fellow-men—unintentionally. All workers among the poor must remember that the best results come, not by assimilating themselves to those who are to be influenced, but by the force of contrast. In a very poor neighbourhood I constantly followed in the traces of a sisterhood trained on what were considered practical and liberal lines, but I found that even—or one might say especially—in the most unpolished households they had aroused a certain amount of antagonism, not by their religious teaching, not by their love of fresh air, but by the loudness of their voices and the high percentage of slang and unlovely colloquialisms to be found in their speech. They were women of such an age and such a position in life that this method and manner must have been deliberately acquired. I wish I could have brought home to them a piece of information given to me by an old sailor some thirty years ago : "A loud voice is no good in a storm. The youngest, shrillest-voiced midshipman stands by the captain and

repeats his orders. His thin little pipe carries farther than the boatswain's deepest roar." I have been shown men who have been raised from the lowest degradation by the efforts of the Salvation Army, but the ordinary working-man laughs more or less good-naturedly at their "goings on," and the ordinary woman shrinks from them with aversion, every sensibility outraged by their blatancy. And in duly varying degrees this is true of all "popular" preaching. The most likely remarks with regard to a clergyman who is really influencing the lives of his poorer parishioners would be, "He has such a quiet way of speaking," and "You'll always find him the same."

I remember the horror with which an intelligent young woman told me, on returning from church, "Mr. — said that somethin'er-other—I didn't catch what—was no more use than *beefsteak to a baby*. There's a way of talking! I should think his wife might learn him better."

She honestly preferred a locum-tenens who discoursed lengthily on "the trinal triplicity of the heavenly hierarchy," and "adamantine chains and penal fire." The latter is always an attractive subject. I once heard a country rector hold forth on it. His sermons were usually of a strictly practical and moral nature, but were coldly

tolerated on account of their brisk delivery and extreme brevity. On this occasion, however, the worst member of the least satisfactory family in the village told me spontaneously, "Ah, I could have listened to Rector for an hour. I did think it lovely."

It has been suggested that the difference between the angelic and the human mental powers may be that to these spiritual beings all past experience presents itself simultaneously to their minds whenever they wish to recall it; while to mortals it appears successively, and often in very slow succession, thus necessarily giving rise to ill-balanced judgments. However this may be, there can be no doubt that the simultaneity of the recollection of all the essential points of a question varies with the general intellectual development, and the contradictoriness and apparently wilful falsity of the evidence given from day to day by uneducated witnesses depends upon the relative weakness of the power of seeing things as a whole. One day the general consensus of opinion in an entire village, or in a couple of streets in a working-class quarter, will be that Mrs. Purkiss is an excellent wife, and if the faintest chip or flaw can be found in her character, it is entirely due to her husband; and a large amount of evidence, all substantially true, is brought forward to prove

the case. Mr. Purkiss's character in no way changes, but he breaks his neck, has a bad attack of pneumonia, or develops consumption. Instantly opinion veers round : every scrap of evidence in favour of Purkiss and against his wife rushes hurriedly to the neighbours' minds and tongues, and Mrs. Purkiss's virtues sink out of sight with equal completeness and rapidity. Probably it is the same cast of thought which in earlier days denied the unity of nature and produced innumerable gods and devils. Outside a police-court there is not much reason to doubt the evidence of uneducated witnesses—one only needs to doubt its completeness, and beware of their conclusions.

It is always dangerously easy to take a too pathetic view of matters. A lady accompanying me on my rounds was struck by a forlorn little figure tenderly nursing one of her father's Sunday boots, wrapped in a dirty pinafore which had been intended to hide the holes in her frock. I knew that she was the child and grandchild of skilled artisans, and I had seen her so often standing erect in her Saturday tub that I knew the dirt was superficial and that no signs of want or ill-treatment were observable ; but the pathos of the scene was too deep to be combated by mere common-sense, and my friend went home and dressed a doll for her. The child received it doubtfully, but with

a slight preponderance of pleasure. That day she broke it, the next she utterly destroyed it, and was soundly slapped by her slatternly mother. Half an hour later I saw her, the tear-stains scarcely dry, smiling grimily but sweetly as she hushed her father's boot to sleep once more.

It is peculiarly easy to exaggerate the sufferings of children, because we only see the injury inflicted, and cannot estimate the sensitiveness which regulates the amount of pain consequent upon the action we reprobate. I knew an instance where an only and idolised child endured between the age of three and five the caprices and violence of a nurse who ought not to have been in charge of her for five minutes. Sometimes the woman's anger and recklessness were so great that severe bruises were visible, and she would account for them by saying that the child had fallen down. Occasionally the father uttered a puzzled protest : "But *when* does she fall down ? She always seems to me so sure-footed." But no serious doubts were felt until one evening when the nurse had a holiday. The mother took her place, and discovered bruises that no conceivable series of accidents could have caused. The little girl was never permitted to set eyes on the nurse again, but when tenderly reproached for her want of confidence in her parents, she could give no explanation of her conduct. She was a lively,

intelligent, and to some extent a sensitive child ; but she was no Harriet Martineau or Charlotte Brontë. Years afterwards she told me : " My parents blamed themselves far too much over the matter. I did not even dislike the woman. She used to fly into a rage and beat me, and then she would be sorry for it and give me sweets. I simply never thought of complaining. Perhaps if she had ever asked me not to tell, it might have put the idea into my head ; but she seemed to take my silence as much for granted as I did." There are plenty of people who would have attributed every weakness or misfortune of their after-life to even a twentieth part of the ill-treatment that this more happily constituted nature had endured without so much as a shadow of retrospective resentment.

In considering the condition of the poor, we must not read tragedy where the actors read comedy, or shed tears over what they consider an amusing farce. Take this, for example : on a hot spring day, an old man, very stiff and slow in his movements, was ordered by his employer to wheel a sack of seed potatoes to a house a mile to the north, and a sack of cooking potatoes to one a mile to the south. He exactly reversed the process. When he suddenly discovered the mistake, and that this fatiguing piece of work must be done over again,

he roared with laughter, and looking round for someone to share the joke, saw a poor old woman standing on her doorstep, and crossed the road to explain the matter to her, and she joined very heartily in his mirth. I recollect a story told me by an old gentleman educated in a rough public school. It was in the year 1832, for the recital was somehow connected with the burning of the Houses of Parliament. One of the youngest of his schoolfellows went to the form master and asked, "Please, sir, will you give me a sheet of paper to write a letter home ?" "Why ?" "Please, sir, it's so long since I heard from anyone, that I'm afraid they're all dead." "If they're dead, they don't want any letters. Go away, boy." This passed throughout the school for an excellent jest, and even the sixty years that elapsed before it was related to me had not been long enough to develop a sense of its pathos in this one, at any rate, of its hearers.

That the poor are "all alike," with the implication that we are entirely different and better, is a common fallacy. But, after all, why should one be surprised at the general failure to distinguish, to recognise the broad human likenesses, and yet neither exaggerate nor overlook the "odds that make the difference"? The poor think in the same way of the rich, and the rich in their eyes

are all but the weekly wage-earners. "I ain't got nothin' to say against Mrs. P.," said a villager; "so soon's anybody's ill, she do send them something." "And who sends Mrs. P. anything when she is ill?" "Oh,"—in tones more horror-stricken than if I had uttered what was notoriously a libel,—"she don't want nothing. She's got plenty of money." The lady in question kept no servant, and spent far less than the cheapest servant's wages on dress; on personal pleasures she spent nothing, and she had to work extremely hard to supplement her impossibly narrow income.

The poor are remarkably like ourselves; we may add the colloquial "only more so," but not unless we are including good points as well as bad. We are apt to think that wage-earners are specially differentiated by their improvidence; but those whose natural goal is poverty hard by destitution are to be found in all classes, and if the well-to-do are slower in reaching their destination, it is merely because they have farther to travel. I knew an instance where a man earning a fixed income of two thousand a year died suddenly in the late autumn. He left three young daughters, who had never in their lives brushed their own hair or buttoned their own boots, and not enough money to pay the bills due at Christmas. Another, for many years in receipt of upwards of five hundred,

died, leaving boys in an equally bad position. One of them, a lad of seventeen, in no way mentally deficient, could barely read. In a third case a middle-aged man in receipt of four hundred died after a brief illness, and the day following the funeral a subscription had to be started to meet the pressing wants of his widow and only child. In yet another case a man, after capitalising and squandering his own pension, sold his *widow's*. Considering that the sale was illegal, and that the purchaser could not be certain that the seller would leave a widow, and still less certain how long she would remain one, it can be imagined how trivial the temptation was, the mere bottle of whisky for which he sold it. The dying words of another well-paid official, addressed to his penniless daughters and professionless sons, were, "Remember that you have the Benevolent Society to depend on." At some period of his life he had been induced to bestow a small donation on this corporation, and he expected a return, which shows that the imaginations of improvidence are far beyond the proverbial dreams of avarice.

Deception appears to be no sin at all, and any punishment dealt out for it is regarded as harsh and capricious. For example, in many country districts it is an unwritten law that during the spring an agricultural labourer may ask for a day's

paid leave "to plant his garden," although in others Good Friday afternoon, regardless of date or of weather, is considered to be the right and peculiarly blessed time to devote to this purpose. On one occasion, when a man claimed this privilege it happened to be extremely inconvenient to his master, but it was granted without delay or demur on account of his large family. Soon after the master had the annoyance of discovering that not a single spadeful of earth had been turned in the man's garden, and that he had spent the day working for another farmer. He dismissed him, and although employment was only too easy to obtain in the neighbourhood, he was considered by the villagers to have shown extreme severity.

The modern idea of morality as between employer and employed is so one-sided that one is tempted to accept Nietzschean theories as to its origin and value. The Anglo-Indian constantly complains that no "dastur" is ever in his favour, but exactly the same thing goes on in England. An employer must always and in all circumstances keep his word, but the employé considers himself in no way bound to do the same. The fact that there are two ends to every ladder never seems to enter people's heads until they are in a position of some responsibility.

Secrecy is strongly developed among the poor,

and although often stained by deceitfulness and even fraud, is closely connected with self-respect and independence. Wages and the expenditure of money are always shrouded in thick darkness, but all details connected with food are trebly secured from observant eyes, however kindly. As a child I remember the long rows of men in the royal dockyards seated each on his tool-chest in the building-slips, furtively eating his dinner. A benevolent admiral superintendent was struck by the extreme discomfort of the plan, and had tables and benches constructed and fixed by the hundred yards. In the course of three years I never saw them used. "Is it likely?" asked a foreman, with pity for his ignorant good-will. "Will the man with bread and cheese, and none too much of that, spread it out by the side of a man whose wife has sent him a nice hot dinner? Why, there are heaps of men whose wives bake a batch of pies on Sunday, and they eat one a day all through the week. Sometimes the pie has a division down the middle, and there is fruit on one side and meat on the other." School children are constantly forbidden to tell one another what they have had to eat—unless occasionally, when there may be something to boast of. If it were possible, these matters would be as sedulously concealed from the district nurse

as from anyone else ; but her visits are so frequent that they are certain to coincide sometimes with a family meal. One detail is specially stamped on my memory : if the family resources permitted the purchase of a pound of butter, the whole pound was always placed on the table, however hot the kitchen might be, or however long the meal might be kept about. Naturally, it did not take long to reduce fairly good butter to the condition of rancid oil. It was part of my duty to ascertain whether the families I visited were in receipt of parish relief. Whenever I noticed an abnormal wastefulness with regard to bread, I spared myself the annoyance of asking what was always an irritating question.

“ Doling out alms ” is an action spoken of with common contempt, but if given at all they should certainly be “ doled.” The mere fact of requiring alms affords a strong presumption either that the recipient has never been accustomed to deal with any but minute sums, or that he has entirely failed in the management of larger ones. An old man in the workhouse told me, with reference to a comrade with whom he was on very friendly terms, “ He has a daughter who is most uncommonly kind to him—in a way. Las’ Chris’mas she goes and sends him a sovereign and a half. In three days it were all gone, and as he was never even drunk, you can

guess how much he had out of it. If she'd a-took the trouble to give it to him a shillin' at a time, it 'ud ha' lasted him pretty well all the year, and he'd ha' got some good out of the money. Most of it went standin' treat to persons he'd never seen in his life before."

The naïveté of the poor is often extremely amusing. "Fancy anyone going for to steal!" said an exceedingly lazy girl. "Why, if I wanted anything, I'd *much* rather ask for it than what I'd steal it." I can easily accept a "yarn" told me many years ago by an old sailor. A small and hungry drummer boy was left alone, while a sudden change of weather delayed his messmates' arrival, confronting the dinner prepared for the whole party. The rule is, "Help those on watch first," but as everyone but himself was on watch, this scarcely seemed applicable to the case in hand. Half an hour passed away, and the men arrived ravenous. There was a sudden pause, and a general shout of indignation: "Who's ate all the lean?" "I did, messmates." "And who the devil d'you suppose is going to eat all the fat?" "I will, messmates."

Few questions are more difficult to solve when one is brought much into contact with wage-earners than those with reference to the lending of money. One lady told me, "My father, throughout his life,

which was a very long one, frequently lent money to poor parishioners, and he was invariably repaid ; but this is entirely contrary to my own experience. Anything that I lend is gone for ever. Last winter, for example, when work was very slack, I lent a house-painter £7 to prevent his home from being broken up. Ever since the early spring he has had steady employment ; it is now September, and he has not repaid one farthing. I went to his wife a month ago and said, ‘If you cannot pay me in the summer, when can you ever hope to do it ?’ But there has been no result.” The fact is, human nature cannot be trusted in any class of life to repay a loan to private persons, and although circumstances might sometimes arise when a few pounds might be the salvation of a family, if they could be borrowed at a reasonable rate on a purely business footing, nevertheless any widespread facilities for borrowing money would cause infinitely more mischief than they cured.

The duty and inward satisfaction of being industrious workers is little recognised among the poor. They bow to necessity, but few of them even profess to like work, and most of the exceptions are to be found among the young and the elderly. Of pleasure, the best part is always picked out for description and comment ; while with regard to work, only the worst moments

of the worst days are thought worthy of mention. Any person who reverses this process is looked on with disfavour as either crabbed, cynical, or affecting a pose. I myself felt some qualms of doubt as to the wholesomeness of mind of a schoolgirl of fourteen who described a picnic in these terms : " We had a long walk in the sun on the high road. Then it rained heavily, and after that we went in the forest. I saw a toad, and I caught a cold."

It is a common fallacy with regard to the poor that their brain comes very early to maturity and generally ceases to develop about the age of sixteen. If I accepted this belief, I should be driven to the conclusion that the lower classes are hopelessly degenerating, and with extraordinary rapidity ; for everywhere I find that the middle-aged are more intellectual than the young, and have more decided and more practical views of ethical and religious subjects, and the old are frequently more liberal-minded and generally advanced than the middle-aged.

From the age of thirty I should be inclined to think that the men develop more morally and the women intellectually.

Possibly the leisure of old age has much to do with the greater intelligence often displayed at this period. Totally illiterate men have some-

times amazed me with the keenness of their comments on such matters as local politics, workhouse management, and the dispensing of public and private charity, and also with their extreme fluency of speech and freedom from the senile trick of repetition.

Probably the most generally accurate test of mental culture among the poor is their conversational power, with special reference to extent of vocabulary, and ignoring all irregularities of grammar and all peculiarities or errors of pronunciation.

The number of words in common use among the lower classes is greatly underestimated. Learned men, in making their calculations, do not seem to grasp that the wily villager is deliberately choosing such words as he is sure his interlocutor will understand, and rejecting all those he thinks he will not, in addition to all those that he has in frequent use, but fears a stranger may consider too fine for a person in his position, and all those which he fancies he may expose himself to ridicule by mispronouncing. These tendencies always have to be allowed for. A woman missionary, who had taken a considerable part in reducing an African language to writing, told me: "We had to stalk words as if they were the shyest of game. Out of sheer politeness, the natives—especially the women

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—would keep on using the three or four hundred words that we already knew, just as one would instinctively do in speaking to a very young child. I found the best way was to get them to tell me some of the fables and fairy-tales that they recite with so much verve and humour, and in the excitement of the moment they would forget my ignorance, and bring out words and phrases entirely new to me."

As an instance of the care taken only to use words with which they believe their interlocutor to be acquainted, an old countryman, doubtful if I knew the meaning of *foal*, substituted *the increase of the horse*.

If one wishes to know the ordinary language of any poor person, one must be exceedingly careful never to make any remark on the subject or to ask any questions. In a village bakehouse I chanced to hear a woman say, "Where's the peel?" and pick up the long wooden shovel with which the loaves are drawn out. I said, "I have not heard that word since I was seven years old. I remember it then in a fairy-tale." She was deeply offended, and for several years after she never spoke freely in my presence.

Another source of error in such calculations is this: the inquirer observes persons of twenty or thirty who have had the advantage of a Board-

school education, finds their vocabulary narrowly limited, and rashly concludes that older people of the same class would employ speech of a still less varied and precisely adapted nature. This is an entire mistake: the elders have had time to read more, especially newspapers, have had more experience of life and work, and can generally find abundance of words in which to clothe their observations and theories. "Bad boots was the instigation of my illness," an old villager told me one day last winter. Also it must not be forgotten that, like children and foreigners, the poor understand and appreciate a much wider range of language than they use. A rich and picturesque vocabulary is a real pleasure to them. *Plain Words for Plain Men and Women* seems to afford no mental satisfaction whatever, and to be too arid a spiritual food. "Not to have no language," is about the most damning criticism that can be uttered of any preacher or teacher. Shrewd, active-minded, unlettered persons, wishing to explain matters exactly without entering into what they consider coarse detail, often seem to suffer from the same kind of irritation over a gap in their vocabulary as is sometimes found in intelligent children confronted with some new experience, and for polite use they greatly delight in the capture of general utility phrases, such as

"The happy medium." I have often been amused to hear third-generation cockneys make fairly accurate use of nautical idioms picked up from myself, such as : "Give it a wide berth," "Sailing too close to the wind," "Not much time to veer and haul upon," and so on.

The finest word I have heard in use lately came from a country groom. A lad was helping him harness a horse, and asked which of two straps he was to buckle first. "Oh, it's quite immaterial," replied the groom. "He talks like a book" may often be truly said of the poor. They *do*; and very stiff and pompous books into the bargain. I have many cottage neighbours who make such remarks as : "I see your new fence is under course of construction," "My son's present habitation is in a most salooprious sitooation," "Our monarch would appear to be upon amicable terms with the majority of the foreign royalties."

Often the use of this fine language is confused and confusing. "I have to maintain my brother now, as well as my father," said a vigorous, happy-looking woman of about forty. "Is your brother an invalid?" "Oh no, mum. We all has our health. Even father can do a day's work nows and thens, and he always will when he can. He ain't like *some*." "Then why does not your brother work?" I asked, much scandalised. "He

do, mum. Never been out of work in his life."

"*Maintain*" was simply the elegant English for "*keep house*."

Many words used locally seem to be imitative. A peasant farmer's wife was taking a favourite dog a few miles by train one winter's night. She had a ticket for the animal, but did not wish him to go into the guard's van. "I see the station-master a-comin', and I didn't want no splutt with him, so I just cootched the dog up under my shawl, and he was glad of it, for he was fair nithered with the cold."

As one would expect, there is great ignorance of all technical language, and as doctors can seldom free themselves from its use, patients in the poorer districts learn very little from them. "He said father's leg was chronic," a villager told me hesitatingly and with evident anxiety, "but I don't know what it mean, and I didn't like for to ask." "The doctor says her temperature is *much* lower," said another woman, with a burst of tears. Her little daughter was suffering from a complaint of which one of the worst symptoms is a high temperature.

Most of the warnings and regulations drawn up by public authorities and affixed on notice-boards are totally unintelligible to the persons for whom they are intended; in addition, they are nearly

always out of reach of men and women of average height, while the lines are so long that they add incalculably to the difficulties of unpractised readers.

Many years ago, an Oxford tutor gave me this rule of literary composition : "When you have written a paragraph, read it over and ask yourself, What would the stupidest person of my acquaintance understand by this ? Do not be satisfied unless you are sure that your meaning would be clear to him." On a freehand drawing-copy, of such an elementary nature that it can only have been intended for children or young workmen, I read this printed direction : "Special care must be taken to preserve the continuity of the tangential spirals." The sole meaning of this legend was that part of a vine tendril was hidden by a leaf, and that the pupil must make it reappear at the right spot.

Differences of pronunciation usually pass unmarked, but a favourite expression among the poor, which I think has come into use quite recently, is, "Ah, that made him put in his aitches," used in the sense of "That brought him to his bearings." A very little girl, the daughter of an old friend, was spending some weeks with me. The child had lived much abroad, and had many peculiarities of accent, but her persistent neglect of the letter "h"

was the most marked, and we began to fear that she did not reproduce the sound because she was incapable of hearing it. Our young cockney housemaid heard us speak of the matter, and one night told me complaisantly, "Miss Katie has said an 'h.'" "Has she? What did she say?" "She ast me not to put the gas hout."

One sign of the growing familiarity with printed language is the almost complete disuse of a mnemonic formerly very common among the poor. On hearing a new name they would say, "I'll think of so and so" (generally something utterly incongruous), "and then I'll be able to call it to mind." For instance, an old servant heard that the daughter of a former employer had called her little girl Mona, and remarked, "I'll never be able to remember it. Oh yes" (more hopefully), "I'll think of ammonia." Another old servant whose mistress was about to give a small dinner-party heard her speak of entrées, and said, as a friendly warning, "We can't have no on-trays, mum." "Why not?" "We ain't got no nice trays to hand 'em on." The same woman always called a conversazione a conversation-only, and considered it most illogical that refreshments should be provided.

The physical gift most rarely found among wage-earners is a pleasant voice. Those of them who

have been much in contact with their social superiors are keenly conscious of the usual difference in quality, and in describing their impressions of any lady or gentleman are far more likely to comment on their manner of speaking than on their personal appearance, which, indeed, often passes unnoticed. "Her voice is like music ; I could listen to it just for the sound of it, without heeding what she was saying," was the remark of a very brusque, noisy woman, with reference to an officer's wife, noted in her own circle for her beauty, but whose voice had always been taken as a matter of course. A sweet voice is the possession most earnestly coveted by a mother for her little girl ; and if the child should chance to have one harsher, shriller, huskier, or even louder than usual, it causes more maternal distress than if its toes turned in or its ears stuck out at right angles.

The great powers of passive endurance developed by the working classes show themselves markedly in the length of time that they can often support severe illness in circumstances most unfavourable to good nursing. Doctors unaccustomed to treat the poor in their own homes almost invariably underestimate the time that a dying patient will linger. Occasionally, I know, the opinion offered that "he will not be here very long," is merely a pious fraud on their part, intended to stimulate

the natural affection of relatives whom they suspect of laxity or indifference ; but the warning is frequently uttered in cases where there can be no question as to the complete devotion of those in attendance on the sufferer.

This insufficiently recognised power has practical consequences in nursing. I recollect one young surgeon, fresh from hospital, horror-stricken over the first patient he had ever seen dying of cancer neglected until operation was impracticable, and providing the most elaborate dressings at his own expense. I said to him warningly, "I know of at least twelve similar cases ; you cannot continue to do this. You will have to depend, as we do, on clean boiled rags and boracic lotion. Although it seems impossible, the woman may linger for years." He would not listen ; but he was far from rich, and as weeks and months passed by he sent smaller and smaller supplies from his surgery. At last came a day when the husband went to his house and openly cursed him for sending so little. The family had been entirely pauperised, and we could not get them back on a self-supporting system, and ultimately the patient had to be removed to a Home for the Dying.

If charitable persons would but look around them and realise how easy it is to pauperise members of the middle classes with long genera-

tions of independence at their back, they would not be in such haste to enfeeble the poor by untimely assistance. I call to mind a school for professional men's daughters, a certain proportion of whom were elected pupils and educated for a merely nominal sum. Wily parents could calculate fairly well what chance their children had of success, and at twelve or thirteen, or even later, these girls arrived unable to read, or write, or spell, or sew. After nearly thirty years' experience—the brain of a Committee works more slowly than that of the slowest person adorning it—it was found so undesirable to place such a premium upon neglect that the validity of the election had to be subject to the girls' ability to pass an entrance examination. How many children had been let run wild on the off-chance of their election will never be known.

Although covetousness is a rare failing among the English poor, they nevertheless set an unduly high value upon money wages, and an unduly low one upon favourable conditions of labour, and not only for themselves, but for their children. Few indeed are the parents who will choose light and varied work, healthy surroundings, good moral influences, and a prospect of rising, in preference to heavy, monotonous labour carried on in circumstances likely to injure health, morals, and brain

power, if there should be a difference of eighteen-pence a week in the nominal wages. It is much the same with girls in domestic service. The lodging-house keeper is rarely without eager applicants for the honour of serving her, while quiet private families have the greatest difficulty in getting or keeping any servants. The temptation here is not the regular wages, which would be from twenty to a hundred per cent. higher in the private family, but because of the "tips," any irregular money gains affecting the imagination out of all proportion to their average amount. Here and there a wise mother protests, "She gets good wages, and she spends 'em, but what is she *learning*? Her mistress don't teach her nothing"; but they are voices in the wilderness.

If it were possible to give Council-school children clear ideas as to the nature and uses of money, it would be more valuable even than a knowledge of cooking, or laundry-work, or baby-tending; for all these things "would be added unto them" in due course. Misconceptions with regard to money lie at the root of premature child-labour, the paid labour of married women, and many another economic error for which we all pay dearly in mind, and body, and soul.

Past history furnishes us with many excuses for the excessive value set by the poor upon money

wages : to have and to spend them is undoubtedly an essential of liberty, and perhaps it would be fairer to say that they set too low a value upon favourable circumstances of labour than that they think too much of its monetary reward. One has only to live in districts where old customs linger in order to realise the injustice that may even now be done to a man who has to accept as part of his wages a large garden which he has not the superfluous time and strength to cultivate, bacon that he dislikes, and cider that he would be better without.

I have met one woman who estimated money at its true value, and who insisted on removing the husband "with one failing" from the town where he earned £4 a week to a village where he earned 35s., seven of which she saved. "We've no children," she said, "and 28s. is as much as we can spend without getting into mischief." Finding that even the dingy little ale-house was too attractive for her husband, she had a quart of beer sent in every evening, and would invite any cheerful neighbour to come and share it with him ; and she professed herself unable to get through the house work or even the sewing without his assistance. She has made a small world for him, and he is so contented with it that her anxieties fade

more and more into the background of their daily lives.

When one begins to know the poor intimately, visiting the same houses time after time and throughout periods of as long as eight or ten years, one becomes gradually convinced that in the real essentials of morality they are, as a whole, far more advanced than is generally believed, but they range the list of human virtues in a different order from that commonly adopted by the more educated classes. Generosity ranks far before justice, sympathy before truth, love before chastity, a pliant and obliging disposition before a rigidly honest one. In brief, the less admixture of intellect required for the practice of any virtue, the higher it stands in popular estimation.

Men and women of the upper classes do not realise the necessary conditions of poor people's lives, and, if their time has been spent exclusively among the well-to-do and comfortably housed, they fail to grasp that much that they take for an indispensable part of modesty and decency is only a convention. Families living in two rooms, or even one, are not necessarily more immoral than those renting five, and they are often extremely clean in person and surroundings.

Some years before I worked in Portsmouth, Father Dolling roused national horror and local

indignation by the charges brought against the inhabitants of certain of its districts. In the street most scathingly attacked, consisting for the most part of two-roomed dwellings, I have spent a great many working hours, and although Father Dolling's influence in the town has almost as completely passed away as if he had never existed, I found no trace of the horrors that he denounced, and that one of his oldest friends and disciples, a business man in London, described to me in veiled words, but with shudders of loathing. In another part of the town bearing an exceedingly bad reputation I found nothing to complain of but the repellent manners of the denizens, and I soon learnt that these were strictly kept for the outside world, the inferiority of which, in every respect, is to them a patent fact. Once given the entrée, they treated me as civilly as they did one another; but there was so much genuine kindness and social feeling among them that there was seldom any occasion for the services of a nurse.

The value commonly set upon an amiable and obliging disposition leads to much hypocrisy. I said to a girl of nineteen, finding that she had attended the parish church, "I understand that you and all your family are Baptists." "Yes, m'm. I went out of respex to the parson." Another Nonconformist, several years older

regularly attended the Roman Catholic chapel to please her recently converted mistress, and then offered to go to an Anglican church for my personal gratification !

Perhaps hypocrisy is too strong a word to use, as the poor rarely have any clear knowledge of religious doctrines. I lived in one town where all spoilt and wilful children, regardless of creed, were sent to the Roman Catholic day school, because the discipline was more indulgent than at the Board school. The mother of one of these little rebels proudly asked me to hear "what a lovely lot of texes our Gertie can say, and her on'y six last August." The "texes" were the prayens invariably taught to all young children of that faith, and implied doctrines which the mother nominally held in abhorrence.

Parents very generally allow their children to choose their own Sunday school, and to visit two or more if time permits, and possibly those opposed to one another, not merely on matters of church discipline, but on fundamental points of faith. One little girl of ten, a sixteenth and uncannily clever child, did, however, overstep the boundaries of rational freedom when she chose a Unitarian school for the morning and a strongly ritualistic Anglican one for the afternoon. Her mother was seriously scandalised, and promised her a thrashing

every time she received instruction from the Unitarians. She was an obstinate child, but one thrashing from a practised arm was enough. She transferred her morning attendance to the Wesleyans, and her religious studies now cover less widely extended ground.

Even when my patients are very far from honourable, there is something disarming about their childish naïveté. Only the other day, in the middle of explaining an elaborate plan for deceiving her husband as to the profits of a certain bargain, a married servant said to me, "Now, if I do say I'll do a thing, I do do it, and everyone that do know me will tell you the same. Now me husband, he's not straight. If anyone do act fair with me, I do do the same with them." Another woman told me plainly, "If anyone tries to do me, I does them."

To be found out is probably the only thing that brings home to the rank and file any clear conception of wrong-doing; but do my patients greatly differ in this from the children of the upper classes, or—in many cases—from the parents of those children?

Honesty among the poor is too narrowly limited in conception and practice, being generally confined to the duty of abstaining from taking literal possession of other people's goods; but within these

limits it is usually practised, and often in circumstances of the strongest temptation. Except in certain rural districts, I have noted extreme rigidity in this respect; the only possible case in which toleration would be shown would be in that of a woman driven to steal in order to feed her starving children.

Nevertheless, I should say that honesty is to a great extent regarded as an ordinance of man, and it scarcely takes as high a rank as the duty of Sabbath-keeping, for example. The rules with regard to the latter are, however, complicated and full of exceptions, as with all people and nations. I remember an Indian general who went to spend a week with an old schoolfellow, a Presbyterian minister. On Sunday morning he accompanied the family to church, and after the early dinner, either forgetting the strictness of the Scottish Sabbath or thinking that modern relaxation of the discipline reaches farther than it does, asked if he might take the two little girls for a walk. There was a horrified negative from the minister, and then the truly amazing concession: "But ye may tak' the boys. They're just from school, and naebody kens them yet."

The persons most convinced that the degradation of the poor is not only increasing but is of extremely modern origin, have been deluded by -

the fact that they are brought into close personal contact with a much lower stratum of society than formerly, and they are unconsciously contrasting the poor of the present day with those of a past day decidedly above them in station.

Few people are as clear-sighted in the matter as a lady now between seventy and eighty years of age who said to me, "When I first married, my servants were the daughters of small farmers and shopkeepers. Later on I had the daughters of artisans. Now I have the daughters of labourers, sometimes even of casual labourers, and lately I have had several brought up in workhouses, or rescued from notoriously bad surroundings. How absurd it would be to expect that, simply because the education of the lowest classes has considerably improved during the last thirty-five years, my present servants can equal in good sense or physique the ones that I used to have. The girls who would have been my servants in the old days are not extinct or 'degenerate'; they are Board-school teachers, cashiers, milliners, post-office clerks, mothers' helps, and nursery governesses. I have lost, but they have gained; and the untrained labourers' daughters, who become civilised in a house that formerly they would have had no chance of entering, have gained most of all."

"The human mind is hospitable," and side by

side with the belief in the physical degeneracy of the poor lies the expectation that the poorer and barer a home is, the stronger will be the persons brought up in it and the more capable of hard work. This is entirely contrary to my experience. The power of unintelligent drudgery, of what working lads call "slogging away," may sometimes be developed in poverty-stricken homes, but whenever I have found a poor man or woman endowed with energy as well as endurance, I have always found either that they were members of a small family, or the youngest children of their parents, or that they were closely connected with the class immediately above them. Perhaps the last of these conditions is most frequently the determining factor. It would be difficult to say whether, as a nation, we owe most to the members of the middle classes who have risen above their station, to those who have maintained themselves in it, or to those who have intermarried with wage-earners, lending them fresh health, and strength, and vigour. I remember being amazed by the fierce, untiring energy with which, from year's end to year's end, a woman worked for eight turbulent boys, nursed and protected three fragile little girls, and managed to hold her own against a violent and brutal husband. One day I

happened to see her handwriting, and then learnt that she was the daughter of a prosperous shop-keeper, cast off for her mésalliance with an artisan.

More recently I came across the wife of an agricultural labourer, aged forty-three and mother of several nearly grown-up children, but who still possessed a considerable number of sound white teeth, a fair amount of silky brown hair, a good figure, and an excellent complexion, who kept her own well-furnished cottage in perfect order, and was always ready for a hard day's charing or washing; in short, with the appearance and more than the physical strength of a matron of the upper classes. I was surprised to learn that her father had been in the same position as her husband, but on further questioning her I found that her mother had been the daughter of a butcher, and that none of the three children (of whom she was the only survivor) had been born until six or seven years after the marriage, by which time the rate of weekly wages had increased, and she added, with affectionate pride, "Although father was poor, and poor all his days, a kinder nor a better father never lived."

One of the principal charges brought against the poor, founded on much newspaper and charitable report reading, is that they are cruel to animals and most fiendishly cruel to children. In

all my experience I doubt if I have come across as many as twelve cruelly used children ; not one of those was persistently ill-treated, and in the worst case the child on being separated from her madly violent mother cried and fretted almost inconsolably. Moreover, in every instance the guilty person showed unmistakable signs of mental weakness, though it must be owned that in a certain proportion the provoking cause of this weakness was excessive drinking.

With regard to animals, much that is stigmatised as cruelty arises from pure ignorance, and could have been prevented by a little timely instruction. In a country district I had been disturbed by the almost incessant howling of a half-grown puppy, evidently kept on the chain. At last I tracked the sound to a disused stable adjoining the cottage of a most worthy old couple. "Whose dog is it ?" I asked. "Oh, it's Mr. Kay's dog, what lives at the house at the corner." "But his house has been shut up for some time ?" "Yes ; he was called away sudden to his brother what had had a bad accident, and he asked us to mind the dog. He said he'd only be a few days, but it's close on seven weeks now. We tied the dog in the stable. We couldn't have 'un in the house." "No, I suppose not ; but he cries a great deal. I can hear him half a mile away." "We feeds 'un

reg'lar." "I am quite sure of that, but dogs are such restless creatures. Do you never let him out for a run?" "We be afraid of losing 'un. They do say he be worth a lot." "I should like to see him." Rather unwillingly, they led me in. The stable floor was of cobble-stones, and bare except for a thick coating of filth. Tied to a post by a stout rope scarcely a yard long was a collie of not more than five months old. Without waiting for permission I unbuckled his collar, and he rushed through the open door on to the meadow, but had scarcely gone thirty yards when he stumbled and fell, and at the first call he returned to me. Impressed to some extent by my remonstrances and assurances, but chiefly by the sobriety and dejection with which he trotted along, they promised to leave the dog unchained, and the old man soon became accustomed to take it with him as he went to and fro from his work. By the time his owner returned the animal was in fairly good condition, but never entirely outgrew the deformity produced by the constant straining on the rope.

One admirable though often most illogical trait among the English poor is their unhesitating, instinctive championship of the weaker side. "Hit him hard; he's got no friends!" was never uttered except as the wildest jest. It has been

well observed that *vix victis* has never become a familiar tag of Latin in any English-speaking country. I remember a French waiter asked by a too vehement master to "run and do" something for her, rejoicing solemnly, "Mademoiselle, if I ran, I might fall down ; if I fell, I might break my leg ; if I broke my leg, all the world would cry *quel imbécile !*"—a judgment that would certainly not suggest itself to any of my patients or their friends.

On perceiving that the balance of kindness does not turn exactly as our prejudices would have led us to believe, the more highly developed nervous system of the educated classes will be brought forward in our defence ; but when one considers the many alleviations of life among the well-to-do, and the ceaseless irritations, embitterments, and hardships among the poor, there is little reason to accuse them or to excuse ourselves.

On first acquaintance, the poor strike one as singularly deficient in worldly wisdom, often seeming to be without even that rudimentary sense which would show them "which side their bread is buttered." One may modify the opinion later on, but I doubt if the bulk of them are as far advanced in the art as the average child of the upper classes. My first lesson in it was received from a little girl who—most deservedly, no doubt

—afterwards became a bishop's wife. She had acquired great credit among all the mothers and aunts in the parish by devoting herself every Sunday afternoon to the care of her two little next-door neighbours—fat, heavy, over-dressed, uninteresting children of four and six. I was among her admirers myself, until one fatal afternoon when I was sent with a message to her mother, who asked me to go and sit with "that dear good Fanny" while she wrote a reply. "That dear good Fanny" was seated in a comfortable arm-chair in the cool, shady drawing-room, reading aloud to her two protégés, who were seated bolt upright on high chairs with their fat white legs and shiny buttoned boots dangling miserably. I knew the book she was reading, and felt a pang of pity for the weary victims of her kindness, and protested, "Fanny, I'm sure they can't understand a word of it." "Hush! Don't tell them that. I want to read it myself." I returned home to my own story-book, freed from self-reproach, and able to hear what a "most unselfish girl Fanny is" without forming any virtuous resolutions—so uncomfortable either to make or break.

Nevertheless, I believe that the poor have a nameless sense of the infinite complications and interweavings of their own social life, and that it is this, quite as much as any baser quality, which

produces the extreme slowness and indirectness with which the average member of the working classes deals with any difficulty not exclusively affecting his own family. The would-be reformer, after listening to their complaints, asks with impatient wonder, "Have you told the police?" "Have you sent for the sanitary inspector?" and rages over the impossibility of making any head-way against what may to a great extent be instinctive worldly wisdom.

Procrastination is the rule, not the exception, among all uneducated persons, and it adds greatly to the severity and danger of any acute illness by which they or their children may be attacked, and is one of the most fruitful causes of blindness and deformity. It often takes weeks and months to persuade a mother that certain treatment ought to be undergone by one of her children. As long as her mental and moral objections hold out, one's patience may last; but it is apt to give way under the unexpected strain of discovering that however close the tie may be between conviction and inaction, there is no necessary connection between conviction and active measures of any useful kind whatever.

Although there is a measureless amount of passive endurance among the poor, there is little courage of a stirring and enterprising nature. They can repel, but they rarely attack; they can

bear cruel pain, but make no vigorous or toilsome effort to remove its cause. At heart they are fatalists, and consider the struggle for amelioration impious as well as useless. They watch the strivings of the vigorous-minded minority with dismal forebodings and prophecy. Success proves nothing, but when failure comes—as it sometimes must even to the bravest and strongest—the sight rivets their chains afresh, and seems to afford an almost inexplicable sense of satisfaction.

Nevertheless, while unbounded credulity remains such a marked mental peculiarity among the poor, one should be thankful for the width of the gulf that exists between vehement belief and even the tamest action. Domestic and civic peace would be ceaselessly endangered if it were not for this saving weakness of temperament.

IV

OUR MASTERS' RULERS

OUR masters are not really our masters, for the simple reason that they find it too much trouble; but their rulers love dominion, and exercise it rigorously all through childhood and youth, though generally with decreasing severity as they rise in years. There is a general prejudice among the rich that the poor are bad-tempered, especially the men, and that the children suffer accordingly; but no close observer will admit that there is any wide foundation for the opinion.

I remember hearing the captain of a training ship say of a man whose duty it was to give very elementary instruction in seamanship, "I shall land that fellow Black as soon as I can. I feel sure he drinks; he is so irritable with the boys in the morning." How many upper-class schoolmasters would be convicted of drinking to excess if this were the test! Taken as a whole, the labouring classes are better-tempered by nature than the

professional classes, freer from all forms of nervous irritability and less exigeant, and they often acquire great self-command under provocation. A young girl was complaining at home of what she had to "put up with" in her place, and her grey-haired father, who for the sake of wife and children had managed never to be a day out of work for nearly thirty years, said with such kindness and melancholy that she never forgot it, "My dear, if you knew the insults that *I* have to put up with!"

The poor are perhaps chiefly misjudged in this respect owing to their voice, which is ordinarily of a harsh or thin quality, and over which they quickly lose such small command as they ever acquire. It must be owned that this equable temper is partly a quality of their defects. The anger of an educated person is often more easily roused because he has the clear and instant vision of the full consequences of an act which is denied to a less cultured imagination, or because it offends an æstheticism, or a sense of abstract justice, or an idealism entirely alien to the working-man's sphere of thought and feeling.

The popular idea of a working-class mother is of a person always threatening her children with bodily chastisement, while the father inflicts it heavily and frequently, whether with or without

these loudly shouted warnings. In literature of an evangelical-sentimental type, the mother, more especially if a consumptive widow or the wife of a drunkard, is often allowed an almost impossible range of virtues; but it is rare for any father below a tolerably well-defined rank in society to be allowed any merits at all. After many years' close acquaintance with them, the chief complaint that I have to make against the ordinary father and mother is of weak and excessive indulgence towards their children, and the rarity with which they make any steady or serious attempts to inculcate obedience. Frequently a young child's response to an unwelcome command from its mother is a slap or a kick, delivered with all its puny strength, and the renowned Bella Wilfer is by no means the only person who has used her bonnet to discipline a father of a rougher type than the Cherub. One day last summer an artisan drove seven miles to do an hour's work at my house. He brought a boy of five, and left him in the garden with strict orders to remain there. Four times in about twenty minutes the child interrupted his father by creeping into the hall and uttering loud and insistent cries of "Dad!" The fourth time the father carried him out, threatening punishment if he returned. "I'll give you a goo' smack if you don't mind what you're

about," was the prompt retort—which finally provoked a slap that might have disturbed a grain of dust, but certainly would not have alarmed a house-fly. The child cried, chiefly from anger. "You've got to learn 'em," said the father, in rueful apology.

If the unbounded indulgence merely lasted for the first few years, and if the ways of spoilt babies were silently dropped at the age of six or seven, as we are assured they are in Japan, and as we can see for ourselves that they are in France, the matter might not be of much consequence ; but although the particular forms in which the uncontrolled self-will is exhibited generally change when the children reach school age and come under school discipline for a few hours every day, the root of the evil remains. Obedience and the freedom found in submission to lawful authority have never been learnt, and all through their lives the children must suffer from this lack of early training. No warning seems severe enough to affect the parents. In one many-childed household the utter defiance of the three youngest children and the wilfulness of the remainder appeared to be a standing joke to both father and mother. A year ago a girl of fourteen stole a candle from the kitchen drawer and used it (without a candlestick) to read by after she was in bed. She fell asleep, and woke

enveloped in flames. The poor child suffered terribly and has entirely lost the use of one arm, but no change is observable in the parents' system of education. I found that the only lesson that an intelligent girl of nine had been able, unaided, to draw from the occurrence was that "mother hadn't ought to of sent her to bed so early."

As an example of the almost incredible extent to which the children are spoilt: a lad, just of working age, and the son of most frugal and industrious parents, went to "live in" at a small livery stable six miles from his home. A few weeks later the master's wife heard that his father was dangerously ill, and at once offered him a day's leave to go and see his parents, and gave him a present of two shillings to take to his mother, and several little things for the younger children. She gathered from indistinct mutterings and grumblings that he did not choose to walk so far, and told him that he might ride what was called the "old horse," not on account of decrepitude, as it was still in full work, but to distinguish it from two which had been more recently purchased. The boy asked to have the "young horse" instead, and when his mistress demurred, as it was an animal worth quite £50, declared sulkily that he would not go at all unless he could have it. The mistress finally yielded, because

she thought the parents would be cruelly wounded by his heartlessness if he stayed away, and nothing would have induced her to mention his conduct to them. The tale was related by the boy directly he reached home, and he was highly applauded by both parents for his "spirity behaviour."

In all times of illness the results of previous indulgence come prominently into view, and are almost impossible to combat. When father or mother is ill in bed, the usual system with regard to the children seems to be to bribe them to remain out of doors from morning till night. It is rare to find any boy or any girl under thirteen who make themselves of use on these occasions, or who do not seize the opportunity of being "more than common" troublesome, not from calculated malice, but from sheer indisipline.

With regard to the children themselves, these results are often fatal. In one instance, two much-spoiled brothers of nine and eleven had severe attacks of scarlatina. The elder was removed to a fever hospital, where, overawed by strangers, he yielded implicit obedience and made a good recovery. The younger boy began by refusing all medicine and ended by refusing all nourishment, and died on the ninth day of his illness, to the lasting and intense grief of his parents. A private nurse who had had much experience with

boys told me that obstinate refusal of food is common among them when suffering from scarlet fever. I asked her how she dealt with it, and she said, "If the doctor says they must eat, I stand by the bedside, and tell them that however long they keep me waiting, I cannot leave them for a moment until his orders are obeyed." But in cottage homes no one with the leisure or the determination is to be found.

The difficulty of getting children to eat nourishing food is always present, but reaches its height when they are thirteen or fourteen. In well-to-do working-class homes anaemia is sadly prevalent, and it is chiefly due to lack of all discipline with regard to meals. The children eat what they like and when they like, and then at fifteen or sixteen the distressed parents have to spend their hardly earned and hardly saved money on Burgundy, chicken, and fish.

The parents, especially the mother, are not always entirely disinterested; they are to some extent affected by the common fallacy that the more you do for anyone the more grateful you may expect him to be. I have never been able to discover any proportion between benefits bestowed and gratitude experienced. When people enduring a neglected and poverty-stricken old age have told me that they "sacrificed every-

thing for their children," I have sometimes wondered what "everything" was, and whether they had any right to sacrifice it.

I have often been asked if I believed it to be possible for ordinary wage-earners to provide for their old age. To answer such a question with any fulness would require special study; I can only reply that nearly everyone could make some provision, and that those who do already make some provision might easily make more. I maintain that the younger children of a family are nearly always less happy than the elder, and yet money is constantly lavished upon them which ought to have been saved for their parents' declining years. As soon as the eldest child is self-supporting, the parents should begin to think of themselves, even if they cannot do so from the very beginning of their married life. When I have seen parents providing bicycles, pianos, silk blouses, and many other things that the elder ones of the family never had or missed, paying for music lessons, and allowing serious work to be indefinitely postponed, I have reminded them of the wholesomely bitter old German proverb: "One father can support twelve children, but twelve children cannot support one father."

In cases where I have known them and all their circumstances really well, I have sometimes

ventured on a still more personal form of argument, and asked, "What reason have you to believe that your children will be more willing to support you in your old age than you have been to support your parents in theirs? According to their power, your parents did as much for you, and you acknowledge that they treated you kindly. Consult your own heart and your own memory, and be warned in time. Give your children only what is fair and right, provide for yourselves, and your old age will be respected as it should be. Your children will be all the happier, and you will take a proper position with regard to your grandchildren. Can you bear to think that you will live to be treated as you see other old people treated—your little habits scoffed at, your opinions set at naught? It is not by bribery and over-indulgence that you will save yourselves from such a fate. If you had but half a crown a week of your own for life, you would find that it was 'worlds away' from having nothing."

But they are deaf. And not only parents are lacking in foresight, for the comparatively few unmarried women are just as unwise in their attitude towards nephews and nieces. In one house (rented at five shillings a week) where there was an especial abundance of cameras, musical instruments, sewing-machines, etc., I was told :

"Their aunt gives 'em to 'em. She's no one else to think of, bein' an old maid, as you may say." In her case there was not even a decent pretence that gratitude would ever arise in the recipients!

That "children must not suffer" is the password of every educationist of the present day, and because their predecessors expressed themselves differently, they dare to doubt that their love and solicitude were as great. The old-fashioned parent tried to keep his children from suffering by bracing and hardening their feelings and discouraging undue sensitiveness; the modern parent tries to save them by protecting them from everything that could wound that sensitiveness. Let us be just, and own that one method fails as often as the other did; less is done that could hurt the children's feelings, but it takes less and less to wound their almost morbid susceptibilities.

Some years since an occasion for national mourning occurred suddenly. In a village where I happened to be staying the day was to have been one of local rejoicing. A married woman, mother of several children, said to me, "The Committee have indefinitely postponed all the entertainments except the tea and sports for the children, which are to take place as arranged. I do not call it right: it is a time of sorrow, and why are the children not to bear their share?" Remembering

the keenness of childish disappointments, I was inclined to think her hard, but I recognise now that to have shared—even involuntarily—in their country's grief would have been a dignified memory throughout their lives. Some months later the postponed rejoicings took place, and, to my friend's renewed indignation, a fresh entertainment was provided for the children. "The Committee have sunk even below the level of teaching them that you cannot eat your cake and keep it too!" she protested.

And even if it were right, is it practicable to exempt childhood from suffering? In my youth I heard many of my contemporaries say, "My children shall never suffer as I have done"; but when the time came, not only did they learn that education is a much more complicated matter than they had supposed, but their children were so unlike themselves that the simple plan—the only one with which they were prepared—of reversing the system on which they themselves had been brought up, was doomed to failure. They, perhaps, had suffered from dulness, monotony, and repression; are their children's griefs and grievances any less real because they are chiefly connected with excitement and over-stimulation? "When the mind's at ease, the body's delicate," and when the body is at ease, the mind is often too susceptible

to every passing cloud. Leaving all extremes of harshness and severity and unbending rigidity of system out of the question, it is open to doubt whether children treated with invariable tenderness do not suffer far more acutely than those who meet with less meticulous care and consideration. I read a long story the other day of a mother who spent hours over the weighty question as to whether, and when, and how, she could venture to warn her little daughter against the ugly habit of sniffing ! Among all classes I have found a hypersensitiveness among indulgently treated children which quite turned the balance with regard to their happiness. I call to mind especially the families of two country labourers living about a hundred yards apart. In the one household the mother anxiously avoided what she called "hardening" the children, with the result that she could not speak sharply to any one of them without exciting floods of tears, followed by mental depression lasting for the rest of the day. In the other cottage father and mother alike were ready with hand and tongue, but not one of the family was ever known to be out of spirits for half an hour at a time. One of them, aged ten, told me cheerfully : "I used to have a hiding 'most every day because I was so mistiful [mischievous], but it's Bob who gets the most lickings now."

Perhaps one reason why the poor are apt to over-indulge their children is because they see so much of them that they are unconscious of their failings. Boys and girls of the upper classes are frequently told that the less they are seen and heard by their elders, especially their father, the better they will be liked ; and those who tell them this seem to believe that because working-men have to see and hear so much of their children, day and night, that they must inevitably love them little. This is an entire mistake : the more men see of young children, outside working hours, the better they understand them and the stronger their attachment. Sailors, although from certain points of view good fathers, are on the whole cool and indifferent to their children, intensely critical, and inclined to be extremely jealous of them ; soldiers are more demonstratively affectionate fathers and more tolerant of childish weaknesses, but cannot well bear comparison with civilians. Among civilians, again, the man with long and uncertain hours of work never cares as much for his family as the man who rarely leaves home before they are awake and returns before they are asleep.

" Except on Sundays, and perhaps for a short time in the summer, I never see my children by daylight," complained a civilian father. " What's that ? " growled a sailor sourly. " Often for three

years at a stretch I haven't seen mine by any kind of light at all."

In all ranks of life the sailor father is to be pitied, as he is commonly regarded as an intruder. I remember a little girl of five years old going to a favourite aunt the day after her father's return from foreign service with the fretful complaint : "That cwoth old man has come to my howth again !" Quite recently a boy of seven connected with the same family asked his nurse anxiously, " When is that cross old man going away again ? " In the first case the father was about forty, and in the second considerably under that age.

Notwithstanding the indulgence of working-class fathers to young children, and the general absence of any severity when they are older, mothers almost invariably rank first in the children's affection. A man who had been a mission worker for twenty years, specially devoting himself to young people past the age of childhood, told me : " If at a prayer-meeting I ask, ' For whom shall I pray ? ' the answer comes like a shot : ' For mother.' I have to prompt and suggest before they add ' and father.' "

Mothers sometimes weary of the constant presence of their children, and for this reason shortened church services or brief attendances at Sunday school are not approved of. " A nower,

or a nowner'n a quarter at the outside ; why, it ain't worth dressin' 'em for. They're back again worritin' before I've time to look round." On the other hand, short services are greatly appreciated by young men and women. One girl expressed the general regret over a certain clergyman's prolonged illness, and the great dissatisfaction with his substitute. As he had been many years in the parish, I took this for affection and loyalty until she explained : " Rector he do do it over faster. We had ought to be out by ten minutes to eight *by rights.*"

I think there can be no doubt that the co-education now so common in elementary schools, especially in the country, does much to raise the standard of courage among girls—I mean courage of the kind that resists personal unkindness. In mere daring I have always found young country girls uncontestedly the superiors of their brothers and cousins, and the quality shows itself more particularly in their bold handling of animals ; they will deal fearlessly with strange dogs, or harness strange ponies, when a lad of the same age shrinks nervously at every suspicious movement, asking, " Will it bite ? Does it kick ? " But this quality is quite distinct from the courage demanded to resist an injury that also inflicts an inward wound. A girl educated at one of these schools told me that a certain woman's

husband beat her sometimes. I expressed great commiseration. "But," she added, "she isn't a bit afraid o' he. If he do give her a good smack, she do give he another," and I gathered that this was the usual custom in the neighbourhood if husbands so far forgot themselves, which was rather rare.

Altogether a prouder type of character is fostered, for the same girl told me : "When mother slapped me, she did use to say I was hardened because I didn't never cry. I always did cry afterwards, but I wouldn't let she see me."

In considering the children of the working classes, one warning is especially necessary if we would pronounce a just verdict : the rich are apt to judge the poor too exclusively by the conduct of the young. The general argument appears to be : " Huge sums of money and enormous effort have been expended upon the education of these girls and boys, and yet they are rough, noisy, coarse, idle, ungrateful, and with no thought of the future. How much worse their elders must be, how much worse they themselves will be in a few years' time, when all trace of school discipline has vanished !" Are their own children at the age of sixteen or eighteen all that they would like them to be ? Are they as useful, or even as generally agreeable, members of society as they may be confidently expected to become during the following ten or fifteen years ? Then how can they

expect the early training of the poor to be so perfect and complete that there is no room left for the work wrought by experience ? With the poor as with the rich life is the great teacher, and education is only the attempt, more or less well adapted, to place children in such a position and to supply them with such principles that they will rapidly profit by the lessons which in the course of nature must come to them.

It should never be forgotten that the children of the poor are not born grown up, nor are they even precocious ; physically, mentally, and morally they are slower in development than those born of long generations of educated men and women ; and how faulty and imperfect the latter are we know from conscience, observation, and personal memory.

V

SOME OF THE CAUSES OF INFANT MORTALITY

WHEN the general public is worked up to a momentary interest in the fact that fifty thousand infants of less than a year old have died in one town within ten years, they seem to form the impression that this implies the existence of fifty thousand mothers ignorant, careless, cruel, or in a state of helpless poverty. They are under a delusion somewhat resembling that which made a lady say to an elderly widow, "Two thousand divorces! That means four thousand whole families tainted and disgraced, perhaps sixty or seventy members in each, besides the two thousand homes utterly broken up." "My dear," she replied, "you cannot calculate it in that way. Divorce and separation and elopement, and all that kind of thing, run in families like gout or consumption or shadiness in money matters. A single family in a single generation may supply a dozen instances."

In district work I have rarely been in a house

half an hour before I am told how many children the mother has, the number she has lost, if any, their age at death, and its immediate cause. Over and over again I find families of all sizes, from two and three up to fourteen or fifteen, unbroken by the death of a single child under the age of ten years. On the other hand, within a very short space of time I came across a girl of nineteen who had already lost three infants ; young women of twenty-four and twenty-five (cousins) who had each done the same ; a woman of twenty-eight who had "buried six" ; an older woman who had lost eleven, "only one of them old enough to say 'ma'" ; and another who had lost fourteen out of eighteen. Six women had thus already accounted for thirty premature deaths. As more than half of them were young, and even the eldest openly expressed her desire to have three more children, "So's I can say I've had twenty-one," while showing complete indifference as to whether they and the miserable remnant of the eighteen lived or died, they will probably at least double this death-roll before their own lives end.

In the present outcry with regard to infant mortality it seems also to be taken for granted that the death of every infant might, with a reasonable amount of maternal care, have been prevented, and that its continued existence would

necessarily have been a joy to itself, a satisfaction to its family, and a benefit to the community. If it dies, all the blame is thrown upon the mother, and little or no attention is given either to prenatal conditions, which cause the birth of so many infants unfitted to struggle with the ordinary difficulties of human existence, or to general surroundings, over which the mother has practically no control, and which may nullify her most anxious and pains-taking efforts. A large proportion of the direct attempts to save infant life are doomed to failure because the feeble little plants will wither whatever is done for them, or are injurious to the State because they will prolong miserable existences to the period of childhood or early youth, or in the "successful" instances enable them to live just long enough for their progeny to continue the enormous death-rate and to fill workhouse schools and orphan asylums with physically and mentally defective children. The already discredited panacea—sterilised milk, the provision of pure milk, incubators, etc.—are about as useful as ointment on a broken leg. What we have to do is to improve the general conditions of life, and then healthy babies will be born, and will hold their own against the normal number of germs without any scientific tampering with their food.

A healthy infant, wherever it makes its appear-

ance, is an extraordinarily tough little creature, but, as someone remarked before bacilli were known to dance by the million on every needle's point, "Babes are fed on milk and praise." Unless the mother is healthy, they cannot have the first; and unless all her time is given up to her family, they cannot have the last. In homes where wives are not wage-earners, the children are all born kings and queens, and reign absolutely until deposed by their successor, and even then they still reign over some aunt or grandmother or childless neighbour.

The working-class mother is too commonly addressed as if infant-rearing were as simple and certain a matter as the addition of two and two. Cases often occur where she may be excused for believing that it is a much more complicated problem than she is called on to solve, and that some of the factors are not only unknown to her and her critics, but are extremely obscure to scientists. Just eighteen months ago, a boy and a girl were born during the same spell of bitter wintry weather, in cottages side by side, each with the same damp stone-paved kitchen and the same wretched, fireless bedrooms. Boy and girl alike were the eighth children of women well over forty years of age, and were received by the same untrained midwife. The boy's mother was drunk many times during the months preceding his birth,

and had several furious quarrels with her husband, a heavy drinker (not a drunkard) and a very violent man. He had knocked her down at least three times, and once at midnight, armed with a knife, had chased her round the back yard threatening to kill her. The house and everything connected with it was indescribably dirty, and cooking was a totally neglected art. The woman was drunk when the child was born, drunk two days after his birth, and walking about the village a week later. When the boy was a few months old she was often so stupid with drink that, as the neighbours expressed it, "She don't know the poor child's head from its heels." One man assured me that he had met her carrying it head downwards, and another father of a much-cherished family told me: "It made me shiver to see her handle the poor little beggar. I took it from her arms and *roared* at her to try and bring her to her senses." When the child was vaccinated, she was in such a condition that with the doctor's eye still upon her she deliberately wiped away the vaccine from its arm. For some totally inexplicable reason, that boy was born healthy, and has remained so, and there is every prospect of his growing up.

The girl-baby had sober parents of a kind and affectionate disposition. As soon as her arrival was even distantly anticipated, the mother gave up

her only bad habit—an occasional heavy day's scouring or washing for a neighbouring farmer's wife—and the husband, who was very boyish for his forty odd years, relinquished his favourite amusement, "taking rises out of the missus," and lent a willing hand in the house work. The child was idolised and waited on by the entire family ; "If she was a queen," said the neighbours, "they couldn't do more for her." The father even insisted, a most unusual precaution among the poor, that she was to be taken out of doors twice a day, weather permitting, and that she was to go at least a mile away, "and not always be breathing the air round about the house." Nevertheless, she was continually ailing, and died four months ago. How soothing it will be for those parents if some morning a girl health visitor arrives to instruct the mother, or—an infinitely worse and more galling insult—the Mayor of the nearest town offers her a guinea if her next child should attain the age of twelve months !

A favourite suggestion, intended to cope with the ignorance of the lowest class of mother, is to teach the care of babies to all little girls at an age when decent working-class parents pride themselves on their children's complete ignorance of the physical facts of life. It may or may not be an error of judgment on their part, but we have no more

right to force such instruction upon their children with what they consider unseemly prematurity than we have to instil rigid dogmatic religion with equal unsuitability to their state of mental development. Such matters are best taught at continuation schools, at lectures on nursing, mothers' meetings, etc. In private houses, if the husband was less ignorant and prejudiced than the wife, I sometimes found it best to bestow all instruction upon him, and leave him to see that it was put into practice. Men of the upper classes do not in the least realise how much working-men care for their infant children, and how much they do for them. In numberless homes, if the baby gets a scratch or a bruise, or meets with any of the almost inevitable ups and downs of child life, the mother's first exclamation is : " What'll her father say when he comes home ? " And it is often the father's powers as cook and sick nurse which decide whether an ailing infant and its suffering mother shall live or die.

With regard to needless and avoidable loss of infant life, one of the most fruitful causes is illegitimacy. What the mental and moral value might have been of the enormous number of nameless children who perish from neglect, poverty, ignorance, or wilful cruelty, no one can presume to say, but a very large proportion of

them are the offspring of young and vigorous persons, and as a class they are born healthy and with physical powers rather above than below the average. The usual poverty of the mother, and the practical impossibility of at once earning a living for a child and taking care of it night and day, account for many deaths, ignorance for many more, but lack of affection and a bitter sense of injustice probably cause most of all. Maternal love is largely supported by maternal pride and by all the props of family life, and can rarely stand without them. Except in sentimental fiction, the unmarried mother seldom pays her child all the compensating tenderness that she owes to it, and the father's duties are as a rule entirely evaded. Even if marriage subsequently takes place between the parents, I believe it would be found upon examination that the death-rate among these eldest children, and the physical condition of the survivors—a point of more lasting importance—would not bear comparison with that of their younger brothers and sisters. As an experienced Londoner briefly expressed the matter: "Talk o' stepmothers, why, they aren't *in* it with women who've got a child born before marriage and a child born after. If the first one lives—and most often it don't—it's just a slave to the others." Anything that tends to the reduction of illegiti-

macy—whether improved general education, the efficient protection of weak-minded girls, higher wages of women, or earlier marriage of men—must also tend to the reduction of infant mortality.

One source of loss is too commonly overlooked or underrated. If a poor woman dies in her confinement, the child almost invariably follows her within a period measured at most by weeks. Nor is this all. The surviving children rarely fail to suffer in health, the younger ones from want of maternal care and love, the elder ones from over-work and mental overstrain. Most of these deaths are not merely preventable but easily preventable, as every doctor and skilled midwife knows. A little more rest, a little more warmth, a little more cleanliness of the plain soap-and-water and open-window description, and these lives and all that depended upon them would have been saved.

The paid labour of married women, more especially of factory workers, leads inevitably to great loss of infant life, and lasting injury to the originally vigorous survivors. The mother who has nothing to do but look after her home and her children does not invariably do it, but the factory hand *cannot*, even if she destroys her own health in the ceaseless struggle to accomplish duties not only excessive but incompatible. One of my

earliest social recollections is of overhearing a highly placed official relate, with much feeling, how a pretty and healthy baby of seven months old had literally fretted itself to death, while its mother—sorely against her will—had worked ten hours a day in a rope factory for wages of ten shillings a week.

How can a mother possibly afford to pay for as good attendance for her children as she could give them herself if she remained at home? And if she cannot do this, what profit is there in her work? If the child is left at home, the probability is that it is under the charge of some person either young and ignorant or old and feeble, or why should they accept the work and the rate of payment? There are fundamental objections to crèches as to every means of palliating and therefore prolonging evils that need not exist, but I will simply mention an obvious and practical one, which ought to appeal to every mother. In order to benefit by a crèche, infants have to be carried through the streets at times fixed by the mother's working hours and entirely regardless of weather or the season of the year.

Home industries are injurious to child life, and not always in a less degree than factory work, for not only are the mother's time and attention taken up by the work, but the air, light, and space of the dwelling. Moreover, the mother probably toils

much longer hours for considerably smaller pay than if she were under factory regulations, thus injuring her health far more, and affecting that of her children, born and unborn.

My attention was first drawn in London to the disastrous effects of home industries upon child life by the chance testimony of a professional masseuse. I had asked her if she seriously believed in the value of her work as a whole, and she replied frankly, "I think it is mainly humbug, and that is why I am giving it up for general nursing. I once had a case which they called infantile paralysis, and the treatment cured it, but I don't think massage had much to do with the result. The mother was a respectable and well-meaning woman, but a voluntary wage-earner, and the child was of rather a passive, sluggish disposition. She called it "good," and was only too glad to let it lie still, sleeping or waking. When it was nearly three, the father suddenly woke up to the fact that it ought to be running to meet him at that age, and sent for a doctor, who sent for me. I went through the form of massage, and in six weeks the child could walk; but I honestly believe that all the good I did was done simply by playing with it and exciting it, as the mother ought to have been doing from the time it was a few months old."

The mere fact that the home worker generally requires all the light that there is, and drives the children from the position by the window that they would naturally choose, reacts unfavourably on their health. I remember inducing one mother to allow her invalid child to take possession of the sunny bow window of the little front parlour instead of keeping her in the kitchen, and far away from its four small panes of glass ; and as great an improvement resulted in the child's health, and spirits, and intelligence as if the first step had been taken in pauperising the parents by paying for a three months' visit to the seaside.

Neglect, resulting in paralysis or deformity, is especially likely to occur either with only children or in the exclusively boy families of which one comes across so many. If there is any girl available, old enough to carry or in any way convey a baby from one spot to another, the child victim to home industries is most likely to succumb to bronchitis or pneumonia, owing to its being sent out of doors in unfit weather and at unsuitable hours and kept out for an unreasonable time.

If obstinate enough to survive this treatment, the infant is sent regularly to school at three, or even less, to run the gauntlet of measles, scarlatina, diphtheria, etc., although it is notorious that an enormously large proportion of fatal cases occur

between the ages of three and five, and that if a child can be completely protected until the beginning of his sixth year, he is far less likely to suffer seriously from these diseases if he should unfortunately contract them.

In all classes of home industries, and at all ages, the children suffer from the moral and physical neglect inevitably caused by the fact that they have ceased to be their mother's first and most important consideration. Some months ago I was quite at a loss to account for the ragged, dirty, stunted, and half-starved appearance of five little boys ranging in age from four to thirteen. I knew that the father's wages were only a guinea a week, and the house rent was four shillings, but the poverty was not marked enough to account for the rags and dirt. At last I learned that the mother's whole time, Saturday afternoons and Sundays excepted, was spent in scouring the floors of a neighbouring institution, for which work she received eleven shillings a week and perquisites. If money alone would have provided what the children needed, they would have been better off than four-fifths of their sturdy, well-cared-for little schoolfellows.

In almost every case where I have observed children decidedly below the average of their street or village I have discovered either that the mother

was a wage-earner, an excessive drinker, or feeble in mind, two or more of these conditions often co-existing. The married woman working for money is extremely likely to injure her health, and the overstrained, sickly, unnerved woman is specially open to the temptation of alcohol, while the power to retort, "Well, if I spent it, I earned it," removes yet another protecting barrier.

General statements are often misleading, but when one comes to examine concrete cases it is obvious that it is practically impossible for the children not to deteriorate if their mothers are engaged in any form of paid industry; and if a healthy public opinion kept young married women from such employment, widows and spinsters working for subsistence, and middle-aged and elderly women working to provide for old age, would all be able to obtain a reasonable rate of remuneration. No amount of money that the ordinary housewife can earn equals the moral and physical advantage of the concentration of her entire thought and attention upon her own family. Workmen have sometimes told me, using the expression seriously and in no cynical sense, "A woman's business is to spend her husband's money for him."

Men are not, and cannot become, economists on a small scale. If women do a man's work, men too often fall into the way of doing a woman's,

and each does it badly. Public attention is frequently drawn to the totally idle and vicious husband of the industrious wife, but I have seen many instances where he slips into the position of a willing but untrained and remarkably costly servant.

Viewed in the light of their practical results, the establishment, and especially the artificial encouragement, of home industries seem to me little short of deliberate sin against family life. Home industries are the destruction of the home, the destruction of domestic thrift and industry, and one of the most fruitful causes of infant mortality, child neglect, and drunkenness of both man and wife. At first glance they may seem to be an improvement upon the factory labour of married women, but in reality they constitute a more insidious and widespread evil.

Bad housing causes incalculable loss of infant and child life, perhaps almost as much as over-crowding; but as the two so frequently co-exist, one cannot well distinguish between the injuries caused by each. Overcrowding is more easily dealt with by legislation than bad housing, as it would often be needful to visit a house a dozen times at different seasons of the year before grasping its full possibilities of injuring health, especially the health of children too young to attend school

or to be much out of doors. As far as my experience goes, the surface drains of yards are almost totally neglected, and the condition of the roofs—a matter the importance of which increases in direct proportion with the smallness and lowness of the house—is never sufficiently considered. In towns most roofs are water-tight, but they utterly fail in their duty as slow conductors of heat, and even in ordinary years the temperature of the tiny bedrooms may easily range from 30° F. to 90° F., which is a cruel strain even on adult life, and one impossible for many children to bear up against. The fact that houses are our outer clothing, and must be designed chiefly with a view to the economical regulation of the temperature, seems to escape attention. In most of the match-box cottages recently designed the unlucky owners have to spend three times as much on coal as they would do if walls and roof were thicker, while in the summer women will even drink tea cold rather than light a fire until late in the evening. Only last summer a little child lost her life while trying to boil a kettle in the garden, and I found that this dangerous plan had become a general custom in the neighbourhood. "We're baked even without no fire," protested the women when I remonstrated.

Incalculable but undoubted loss of infant life

is caused by what is called "the modern fluidity of labour." The domestic result of this fluidity is that young women are separated from the mother on whom, in case of illness, they are often as touchingly dependent as in the earliest days of their lives, and have to meet their time of trial in towns where they have no relatives and probably no friends, and nothing to rely upon but the uncovenanted mercies of their landlady. The only set-off against this is the cheapness of railway fares, and the increasing unselfishness of the husbands of the older generation. Men of sixty or more will often "do for themselves" for a month or six weeks while the wife goes to the help of the daughter and grandchildren. How different are the relations between the mother-in-law and son-in-law of daily life from those of fiction and the police-court! How little fact there is in fiction, and how much fiction in police news facts! "Can she come?" asks the young husband when the wife hastily tears open the thin envelope with the pale ink and the higgledy-piggledy writing, and a weight falls from his heart when he learns that she is coming by the cheap train that arrives at two in the morning, and that he has nothing to do but walk three miles to meet her and carry home her bundles. If I am in the bedroom with a

young mother, I never need ask who is in the kitchen—I can tell by the very way her head lies on the pillows.

But when all allowances have been made for the complications of child-rearing, and for circumstances over which the women of the working classes cannot be said to have much control, the fact remains that a very considerable number of mothers lose healthy and promising children owing either to their own apathy, fatalism, culpable ignorance, credulity, or sheer laziness. Many of the children who figure in statistics as having died of bronchitis or pneumonia contracted the disease from no deeper or more mysterious cause than having a soaked bib left hour after hour on their shrinking little chests. The only remedies to be suggested are better general education and more detailed moral training, especially the inculcation of a sense of responsibility; encouragement of family feeling; an improved public opinion, which would make parents infinitely more ashamed to own that they had lost their children than that none had been given them; and increased efforts, in all directions and among all classes, to teach women and girls above the age of fourteen or fifteen the care needed by infants and young children. This is considered an age of instruction, but it seems

to me that we are losing very much by the fact that all but professional teachers and grossly ignorant persons appear to be afraid to open their mouths, even after twenty years' practical and tolerably successful acquaintance with a subject, and are too much inclined to believe that everyone in the present generation knows all that pertains to their and their children's bodily salvation, and that if they do not do what they ought to do, it is because they have knowingly rejected the ways of wisdom. Every happy mother of children ought to be a teacher to her acquaintances, whatever position in life they may hold. Ignorance of maternal duties is by no means confined to the poorest persons. These are some scraps of the conversation between two well-dressed women of the lower-middle class, overheard in a railway carriage a few weeks since. One had a child six months of age with her, to whom she gave as much milk in one hour as it ought to have had in eight, while the other ceaselessly stuffed an irritable, pasty-faced, knock-kneed child of three. "She don't eat much as a rule, but she's ate lovely all the way down from London" (four hours' journey). "I've lost three," cheerfully. "I've lost five," boastfully, "and this one has been laid out twice for dead. I'll tell you how I cured her. I always give it

to her if she's a bit run down. Live snails crushed in their shells and squose through muslin with brown sugar. My mother always says she couldn't have saved me and my brother without it. She lost nine. It's my sister-in-law I'm going to now. She always thinks she can't get on without me. She's lost——" But here the whistle shrieked, and we dashed into a tunnel.

I remember seeing a baby of five months old fed on foreign grapes well powdered with saw-dust, which it swallowed, skin, stone, and all after a vigorous but ineffectual scrunch with its toothless gums, followed by drinks of a liquid which was certainly gin and water, but which, judging from the small effect it had when drunk more liberally still by children of three, five, seven, and eight, must have been very weak—unless the whole party were hardened topers. What could one say that was likely to make any impression? There were the five children, good-looking, good-humoured, and entirely free from any serious blemish. The "facts" related as to the feeding of infants may often be true without being in the least characteristic of their ordinary treatment. In a house where there were twelve living children, I was told boastfully by number 4, "On Sundays we all have sausage for our breakfast, even to the baby." I do not doubt it,

but I also know that on cold winter mornings the five children of school age always had hot bread and milk for their breakfast, that they were never allowed to drink tea more than once a day, and that they were forbidden, under penalty, to eat unripe apples or to drink unboiled water, and even in the summer holidays they were never permitted to put on a damp or an unmended garment. Nature is to a great extent an easy-going ruler: if half of her laws are kept, half may with impunity be broken—and she is not even exacting as to which half is accepted or rejected.

VI

THE WORKING-CLASS FATHER

Is the working-class father as black as he is painted? I grant that to the economist he often cuts a sorry figure. His excessive indulgence of young children, his blindness to their higher interests, the low value he places upon general education, his lack of foresight and determination, his limited power of controlling and directing,—all these have an unfavourable effect upon the community. But why is he always out of favour with the philanthropical? Is he less affectionate than the father in the middle classes? Is he less self-sacrificing, less solicitous, less devoted?

The prejudice against him is so strong that all evidence in his favour is unread or misread. Two years ago I wrote a book in which I described the working-class father as he appears to me, and was astounded to read in a review in a religious newspaper: "One impression left . . . is how hard it must be to attract the very rough and poor

by telling them of the Divine Fatherhood, when the fathers they know are for the most part drunken, brutal, and profane."

The more one knows of the working-class father in private life the more one admires his patience and good-humour. "Does the baby cry much at night?" I asked a man who had had about twelve years' experience of matrimony. "No, not a bit. He only wakes up once. He's a wonderful good baby." I knew that this must be more from good luck than good management, and was disappointed of the moral I had hoped to point as to the gain all round arising from feeding children properly, and I said warningly, "He is only saving up his strength a little until he can do the thing properly." "That's it, mum, that's it," he replied, with an appreciative grin. He reflected for a few moments—the grievance, if he thought of it as one, was evidently not on the surface and ready to be poured out at the first opportunity—and then added good-temperedly, "He has his cross time early in the evening. I gen'lly have to trot him round for a nower or a nower'n'half while my wife's gettin' the supper and washin' up." How many middle-class men would see any joke in such a reception after a day's work which averaged over ten hours?

Working-men always seem to rejoice over the

birth of a child ; the welcome it receives may be to some extent the mere reaction of thankfulness for the mother's safety, but there is a genuine personal feeling for it in addition. In an exceedingly poor two-roomed dwelling that I visited shortly after the arrival of the sixth child, I found the father alone in the kitchen, where he had been requested to stay in case he should be wanted, while some of the family played in the street and some were minded by a neighbour. He had bought two sheets of green tissue paper, and with solemn satisfaction was pinking them out to adorn the mantelpiece, visible from the bedroom when the door was opened. No "dinner to the tenantry," no ox roasted whole, ever gave stronger proof of fatherly pride.

From the time a baby is three days old the father is accustomed to hold it in his arms, and at six weeks it is his plaything directly he returns from work. It soon affords unconscious discipline in gentleness and self-control, for after speaking loudly or impatiently to wife or neighbour, he finds it useless to turn to it with tender cajolery ; for the little creature shrinks away terrified, and its confidence must be won all over again.

I find one reason why children are short-coated so soon is that their fathers wish to carry them when they go out of doors, and no man but a

sailor has the courage to be seen with an infant in long clothes. As soon as the child can make the faintest pretence at walking, the father likes to take it out unchaperoned by mother or sister; and if the wife feels any anxiety on these occasions, it is for the baby's finery, and not its person. By the time it comes to the second or third baby they have learnt caution. "But to begin with," their wives tell me, "they're all terrors for spoilin' the children's clothes."

One day in early winter I saw a young fellow of five or six and twenty allowing his two-year-old son, dressed from head to foot in white plush, to walk on muddy asphalt. Two more experienced men were passing, and one hastily interposed, "Hi! you hadn't ought to let the youngster walk on that there pavement. He's sopping up the mud all round." The father glanced at the child's clothes and then replied airily, "His coat's too long. It wants to get wore down a bit." The "old hands" simply gasped, and then exchanged a shrug and a wink, followed by a roar of laughter over the prospect of the scolding in store for him.

There are really no bounds as to what a mere ordinary father will do—or do without—for the sake of his young children. To spend his half-holiday at the wash-tub, or to finish up his day's work with the hardest part of the house cleaning,

is by no means unusual. Most men draw the line at using a needle and cotton, but I have known many expert with a sewing-machine.

Soldier fathers in the seclusion of the married quarters (abodes of misery and squalid degradation, some novelists tell us!) will even make clothes for their girl children. It explains the look on their faces when they take them for a walk. I always thought it was something more than fatherly pride, but have only known of late years that the admixture was the joy of the artist.

A very real sacrifice, becoming more and more common among working-men in the larger towns, is that of sending wife and children into the country every summer for a month or even six weeks, and "doing for themselves" as economically as they can during the somewhat dreary interval. "My wife said I had kep' the house as clean as she could ha' done it herself," one man told me, with mischievous triumph, "but I didn't let on how I managed. I usen't to wash up only once a day. I gave the kitchen a bit of a do out on Sat'days, but I never touched nothing else not till the night before she came home. I began at six, and I was at it till two in the morning. I didn't even forget the door knobs."

For the present distress, and taking short views of life, it often seems easier to deal with

the temporarily repentant drunkard or idler than with the superior father who has ideas of his own on the subject of child-rearing, for they are apt to be one-sided and extremely rigid. One may appeal from Philip drunk to Philip sober, but the worthy fanatic is inexorable, and is the one person with whom I dread coming into contact. His ultimate aims are generally the same as my own, or those of any sane person, but nothing will convince him of the superior efficacy in practice of "purpose unwedded to plans." Not only does he know the goal, but the only path by which it is to be reached, often too stony a one for the feeble or unwilling feet of wife and child.

For example, an exceedingly respectable man in receipt of high wages was unshakeably convinced that it was the duty of every mother to carry her child until it could walk ; and as it was his duty to attend chapel on every possible occasion, his wife received no assistance from him even on Sundays. Although a vigorous, spirited, and industrious woman, she was not muscularly strong, the baby was exceptionally heavy, and, as sometimes happens even with the healthiest children, could not walk at all until he was two years old. The husband absolutely declined to buy a perambulator of any description, and if it had not been for an elderly friend with a cast-iron back and the heart

of an angel, I do not know how the problem of taking the child out of doors could ever have been solved.

A generally good test of mental ability among the poor may be found in the relative importance of the position held by the claims of the future and of the present; but the superior father, in a different way, often shows as little moderation as the ne'er-do-well. In all his calculations the future is allowed so entirely to overshadow the present that I felt every sympathy with one little girl who was driven to protest, when reproached for enjoying the passing hour, "But this was a future once!"

"Hope makes an excellent breakfast, but a poor supper," said one of these over-anxious spirits to a light-hearted friend. "But just think how many of us die without finding it out?" "You wouldn't die if you smelt your supper a-cooking," retorted the other, with how much truth all persons burdened with the payment of annuities can tell!

I doubt if the average father is ever quite happy after his children begin regular attendance at school. Their daily absence is not the relief to him that it is to their mother. If they dislike going to school, he is convinced that they are unkindly treated; while if they enjoy the experi-

ence, he is more than a little bit jealous. Also, they often meet the superior man's sons and daughters, and then subtle and alienating changes may take place in his playthings. They begin to compare and judge, and their criticism is not always silent.

Love of approbation is so strong, that with the indirect influence of these better-bred children and the direct influence of the teachers all working towards refinement, it is not surprising that the poorer and rougher pupils change greatly in language and manner. Two or three years ago, at a village school chiefly attended by agricultural labourers' children, but with ten or twelve per cent. of those who would formerly have been sent to cheap boarding schools, a boy of eight was asked to make a sentence about a bird. He promptly complied with, "I seed a sparrer, an' I copped 'im on the 'ead with a stone." The rest of the class received this ingenuous composition with an irrepressible shout of laughter, and the unfortunate author has been teased about it ever since.

And then another cause of alienation grows up : the ordinary father has never thought of trying to teach his playthings to obey him ; their "shan'ts" and "won'ts" were a mere joke, to be overcome, when necessary, by bribery and circumvention. The mother would find domestic life intolerable

unless some obedience, however imperfect and little to be relied on, were yielded to herself, and she enforces this minimum from her children ; but she does not allow her husband to discipline them himself, and only too frequently she makes no attempt to uphold his authority.

One day last spring two little rascals of four and six, with ample space left for even the wildest romps, were carefully warned by their father not to trample on some rows of peas which were just coming up. Early next morning, before going to work, he went to stick the peas, and discovered that the rows had been considerably injured, spoke sharply to the boys, threatening them each with "a good smack" if any further mischief was done. The mother was frightened, and interfered, and during the day the children deliberately pulled up peas and pea sticks, and raced up and down the rows until the ground was trampled hard. All the father said when he returned from work was : "I'm sick o' gardenin' ; I shan't do no more." But he kept his word, and it meant a loss of at least half a crown a week out of a very small income, in addition to gains that cannot be measured in money.

This mother was incredibly indulgent to her two children. Eighteen months previously one of them—I forget which—had been seriously ill for

about three weeks, and the only way they could get him to take a sufficient amount of nourishment was from a feeding-bottle. The other boy had picked up the same habit, and they were still drinking a pint and a half of milk a day in this fashion, and the mother was sterilising the bottles twice a day with as much zeal as if the sturdy little villains were delicate babies in long clothes.

If home discipline were better, elementary education would be far more effectual, for an enormous amount of time would be saved to the teachers, who often cannot do justice to the class at large, and cannot allow reasonable freedom to better-trained children, because of their incessant struggles with young rebels who have never been taught to obey, and whose parents will not even yield a passive support to any efforts made to bring them to their bearings. An elementary schoolmaster gave me a rather ludicrous description of an encounter he had had with an irate parent. He had caned a boy for persistent disobedience, and directly he released his hold the boy ran home to complain. Half an hour afterwards he reappeared, accompanied by his mother in a towering rage. "I should like to know what you've bin knockin' my boy about for?" "Is that your son?" "Yes, it is. I never lays not a finger on him meself, and I won't let no one else do it, so I tells you

plain." "Please ask him to take his hat off." The woman scowled, but turned to the lad and said peremptorily, "Take your 'at off." No result. "Take your 'at off!" she repeated angrily. The class began to giggle, the woman made a furious grab at the hat, and boxed her son's ears violently. "Take that, you little ——"! The children laughed unrestrainedly, and she dragged the boy away, vowing vengeance on him instead of on the school-master.

When the boys are eight or nine the father generally tries to establish his authority, and if they are less ordinary than himself, if they are either below or above the average in will and intellect, he often fails to gain more than a partial victory. It is too late in the day to subdue them without an amount of severity that he probably considers it unmanly to exercise, or a steady pressure that he is morally incapable of applying. A boy suddenly asked to learn obedience can be almost insanely obstinate. A mother of many sons told me, and I have reason to believe that her words were literally true and not merely a picturesque arrangement of facts: "If their father beats them till they lie senseless on the floor, as soon as ever they come to they'll do whatever it is they've set their minds on." At the same age girls would be very easily brought under control,

but just because they are less aggressively and wantonly disobedient to him, the ordinary father postpones the struggle until they are twelve or thirteen, and then it may be too late for them also.

So long as the mother keeps the upper hand, there may be no immediately bad results; but if other unfavourable circumstances arise at about this period in the boys' lives, the unlucky father will often be driven to declare that the children are "beyond his control." To magistrates the plea sounds absurd, and even contemptible: a boy, a man, a stick—what more is needed?

I knew one most distressing case where the mother's health had broken down, and the father, absent all day at his work, was utterly unable to compel two boys of ten and eleven to attend school regularly. After more than one warning, he was sent to prison for seven days. His berth had been kept for him, as he was steady and industrious, but he returned to work a disgraced man in his own eyes and the neighbours'.

For five or six years the ordinary father often thinks it wisest to ignore his son, but a renewed sympathy generally arises between them when the lad goes to work. This is not merely, "as dull fools suppose," because the burden of supporting the boy is now partly lifted from the parental

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shoulders, but because they are getting on to the same plane of difficulties and interests. Probably the father has never known what it is to be "close on fourteen, and not a thought in his mind but play and school, school and play," but he understands all the conditions of work; and the lad on his part realises as he has never done before his father's daily toil and self-sacrifice.

VII

THE COST OF FOOD

VERY many fallacies with regard to the daily life of the poor are accepted as truisms. It would be easy to draw up a long list of these, but some demand more active and detailed opposition than others, because they are made the basis of innumerable charitable endeavours, and even of State legislation.

One of the most widely spread and injurious is the belief that the poor have to pay a higher price for food than the middle classes. It is an entire mistake, as I learnt from my own and other people's domestic servants long before I had any close acquaintance with working-class dwellings and the expenditure of weekly wages.

In my country home, when I looked over my first crop of carrots, I was surprised to find what a large proportion were grotesquely misshapen and inconveniently large, and made some remark about it to a servant born and bred near the "Elephant and

Cawsel." With her usual superabundance of negatives, she exclaimed, "What, haven't you never seen none of them before, miss ? Up our way they come by the cart-load. They're just as good to eat as the pretty-shaped ones, and four times as cheap."

At a time when, in Sydenham, I was paying three-halfpence a pound for potatoes, a young housemaid told me : "We can get any amount of new potatoes six pounds a penny. Of course they're small, but the children don't mind the bother of scraping them if only their mothers will buy them."

On another occasion I complained that peas were dear for the time of the year at 1s. 10d. a peck, and was told : "Mother" (living off the Old Kent Road) "can buy very nice ones indeed for sixpence a peck. They may be a bit harder than these, but wonderful full in the pod ; and if you juss boils 'em a little longer and with a bit of soda in the water, they comes out as green and soft as can be."

I frequently inquired how much my servants' relatives were paying for bread, and invariably found that the price was a penny or three-halfpence less on every gallon than I paid myself, and in addition it was sold to them by weight, so that they obtained ten pounds for every eight and a half or nine delivered to me. I have heard careful

housewives say that in a large family the "make-weights" are sufficient to supply one child with bread, or that they sometimes accept the difference in plain currant cake, while women content to have bread a day old can often buy it at a great reduction.

On Saturdays meat can always be bought cheaply by prudent people, and not only in workmen's quarters. A butcher who served me for many years was speaking one day of the extravagant habits of the pauperised poor, and told me : "Often of a Saturday night, when a poor woman with a large family has brought me a shilling meat ticket, I have offered to let her take a whole shoulder of mutton, which would have run to 3s. 4d. or 3s. 8d. if I had sold it in the morning, because there was Sunday and practically Monday as well in front of me. Never once have they taken it ; a scrap of rump steak or two or three trimmed lamb chops is their fancy."

At a time when English mutton was tenpence or elevenpence a pound, and the best New Zealand sixpence halfpenny, an acquaintance of mine was in the habit of supplying a former parlourmaid and her pauperised husband with cooked meat once a week, and told me : "I have to conceal the fact that it is foreign, for I am sure they would not touch it if they knew."

Considering that this lady was honourably proud of the fact that her own father had provided a liberal education for five children, given a profession to two sons, and made a provision for his only unmarried daughter, and had done all this on an income that had never exceeded ten shillings a day and his quarters, I was always unable to understand her attitude with regard to a skilled artisan who had only two small children and was well able to earn an average wage of 36s. a week.

The poor, especially in large towns, can even obtain the luxuries and superfluities of life very cheaply. One day I saw a country cottage heavily laden with Gloire de Dijon roses. There were literally hundreds, and I asked at what price the owners would sell me some to send to an old friend who had no garden. They demanded twopence each for specimens that were quite overblown, and declined to take less. Not long after a poor London woman spent a week with my servant. I was cutting flowers for her, and, handing her some moss roses, said, "I suppose you do not see many of these in Walworth?" "No," she replied nonchalantly, "you can't never get them sort for less'n four a penny, but the others is six a penny. Pretty well all the year round I can keep two vawses full for a penny a week."

With regard to groceries, the poor do indeed pay at a higher rate, but whose fault is that? Can any grocer live by selling single candles and half-ounces of tea at the same rate as he would thankfully sell by the pound? Two of the foundation stones of domestic economy are a larder and a locked store cupboard. No "model dwelling" should be built without them, and no girl should be worried to learn cross-stitch marking, or stencilling, or shorthand until she has a clear idea of the purposes served by these two conveniences and has been inspired with the ambition to possess them, while the most essential part of arithmetical knowledge, as far as a working-class woman is concerned, is the ability to keep accurate accounts of receipts and expenditure.

I have always been convinced that the ordinary calculations as to the amount of money necessary to support a family in health and decency were on too liberal a scale, as I have frequently worked in houses where the earnings to my certain knowledge were decidedly below the "indispensable minimum," and yet little or nothing was lacking, and there were many superfluities. I have at last seen a pamphlet drawn up by a woman doctor, with the necessary mixture of science and practical knowledge, and it clearly proves that even in a large town a man, his wife, and four children can

maintain independence and live under healthy conditions on a pound a week. No one can deny that there must be much hardness and austerity in the life led by such persons, or that one could regard their condition as satisfactory if it were stationary or self-perpetuating ; but as long as they are entirely self-supporting they are on the upward grade, while State or charitable assistance cannot fail to thrust them into a lower and less desirable position.

In estimating the amount of money required by the poor for food, yet another and much neglected factor has to be taken into consideration : more food is needed to support mental strain and less to support physical labour than is commonly supposed. It is also open to question whether the poor as a whole may not have developed a more economical digestive system. I remember hearing a naval officer say, "I could eat a blue-jacket's breakfast and eat my own an hour after," and he was by no means a remarkable trencherman.

In the homes of persons mainly occupied in hard work, but far above the poverty line, it is simply amazing to any person accustomed to the appetites of public schoolboys and young professional men to see the slender meals prepared for husband and sons, and to note the long hours

that they will voluntarily remain without food. Among working farmers and their families I have observed peculiarly small appetites. Only a few weeks ago a country girl of nineteen, who had never had a day's illness in her life, explained to me: "If you have cook [hot food] for dinner, you don't want no tea, but if my brother is out all day he looks for cook in the evening."

The ability to digest coarser food, once undoubtedly possessed by the working classes, is rapidly disappearing as less claim is made on their muscles and more on their brain power, and many of the complaints of the housewife's "increasing ignorance of cooking" arise from the rapidly increasing fastidiousness of husband and child. Last winter an elderly village matron took a few handfuls of the sharps she had bought to fatten her pig, and mixed and baked a neat little loaf for her young daughter, "just to show she what us were brought up on." The girl, though by no mean exceptionally dainty, was totally unable to eat it, and it was finally restored to the defrauded pig. "Nor pigs won't be content neither with what they did use to have," declared her mother; but this must be attributed rather to habit than to any fresh strain made on their mental powers.

In the same village I find that the children,

though unable to resist the sourest of cider apples, never trouble to pick the blackberries with which the hedges are laden for several weeks. This indifference is not yet general, for I have recently been in a neighbourhood where the mothers dreaded the blackberry season almost as much as the winter holidays, and where the children could only be got clean to school, or with any appetite to dinner, by many threats of the stick and more punctually fulfilled promises of "a big pie a-Sunday" if they would refrain from picking any until the great business of the day was over.

It is the fashion to disparage the cooking of the poor, and we are such slaves to our own easy credulity that it is almost a shock to realise that all the cooking in the world is done by them. When do the rich cook? And nearly every woman of moderate means who tells you with a sigh of soft self-pity, "I have to do the whole of the cooking myself," would be speaking more accurately if she said, "I partly prepare some of the food to be cooked"—a very different matter from that hand-to-hand battle with the elements which has to be engaged in before even the simplest dinner is ready to put on the table.

Since all the cooking is done by the poor, and most of the practical knowledge with regard to it is exclusively their possession, why do they not

cook oftener and better for themselves and one another? If one carries the inquiry far enough, the conclusion is arrived at that it is because they do not know that food is necessary. If they knew this with an effectual faith, all the intermediate reasons and excuses for not cooking would be swept away.

Thirty years ago, and even later than that, I knew many elderly members of the professional classes who seemed to regard eating as a bad habit peculiarly strong in youth and gradually weakened and brought under control as one grew older and wiser. They sometimes spoke of a "growing boy's" need for plenty of food as if they faintly understood that it was not altogether villainy on his part; but as it was considered equally natural for a growing girl to eat very little, they cannot have had any clear idea why the boy ate this large amount or what service it performed for him.

A considerable majority of the working classes at the present day are at about the same stage of physiological knowledge. They eat because they are hungry, and hunger is painful; and they supply their children with food for the same excellent if insufficient reasons. Gluttony is rare among the poor; eating for the mere pleasure of eating is almost an unheard-of thing except among the young, and it certainly is not encouraged in

them. Daintiness is a vice, and the woman who panders to it, especially in the case of husband and sons, is not considered to have "done her duty by them" as the moral leader of the household. If the poor are not hungry, they see no good reason for eating — why compel yourself to eat when disinclined? why tempt appetite, considering that food costs money, and money is scarce and the claims on it numerous and indefinite? All mistresses who have employed servants brought up in poor and would-be frugal homes tell the same tale: "I can't get them to sit down properly to their meals. Often at eleven o'clock in the morning I find they have had no breakfast, they 'didn't feel to want none.' And of course it leads to anaemia."

The idea that if people are well enough to work a regular amount of food must be taken never seems to enter their heads. Women in their own homes, and for reasons other than poverty, commonly go without food for six or seven hours at a stretch, and, aided by a cup of tea, they will frequently work half as long again without pausing for a meal. To a limited extent, they recognise that severe muscular exertion demands fairly regular supplies of solid food, but they have no more conception that brain work is exhausting than they have that the dressmaker's apprentice

and the school teacher need more baths than the charwoman and the blacksmith.

The popular belief is that the sole reason why the poor do not cook is that they do not know how. This idea of the general ignorance of the culinary art is grossly exaggerated, and there are several reasons and many excuses for not cooking besides housewifely incapacity. In the first place, do the many critics of the working-man's wife realise how much time cooking takes, more particularly when of an economical nature? And do they for a moment grasp the multifariousness of her occupations even when, which is by no means always the case, she is not a wage-earner herself? Granting the state of her mental development and all her surroundings, is it surprising that instead of thinking one or two of these occupations of more consequence than the frequent and regular preparation of food, she is firmly convinced that nearly the whole of them should take precedence of that duty?

Let us take an average, not an extreme case : a woman in moderately good health, and whose husband is earning about a guinea a week in the country or thirty shillings in the town. She has to do the entire house work of four rooms, all over-crowded with furniture, and one of these, being also a passage, has to be laboriously cleaned every

day ; and work of all kinds has to be done with the minimum of labour-saving appliances and with a sparing use of soap ; she has to make and mend for four children, and to do a considerable amount of sewing for herself and her husband ; she has to wash, mangle, starch, and iron for the same number of people. To give a faint idea of the amount of washing done : among the respectable poor, very few girls of school age have less than four white pinafores every week ; those under eight almost invariably have a clean one every day, and it is by no means unusual to have two. Washing overalls and blouses are commonly worn by little boys, and the number of collars and handkerchiefs provided for them is constantly on the increase. It must also be remembered that even if a woman has girls of thirteen and fourteen at home, she has no help from them in work of this kind. If the neighbours say, "She lets her children stand at the wash-tub," you may be certain that you have come across a low type of mother. The accusation is regarded as so disgraceful a one that it is never made lightly. Fifteen is considered fully early for their initiation ; husbands often do the roughest part of the washing to spare their wives, but help is not accepted from the children, much less demanded.

To return to our housewife ; she has two children

to get ready for school every day, and one (a far worse piece of work) who must be induced to get himself ready ; and the fourth, an infant under three, depends entirely on her care during at least seven of her busiest hours. She cannot go out to do her shopping without taking him with her ; probably she cannot leave him for ten minutes in one room while she is sweeping another. I know a boy of two years old obliged to walk nearly four miles every wage-day because his mother is too weak to carry him, his sisters are too young to take care of him even if they were kept at home to do so, and the money for a perambulator has never been saved because up to the time of his birth the family had lived near a shop. In many parts of the country the woman will have to do most of the whitewashing and papering, work that needs doing three times as often in small rooms as it does in large ones, and there may be animals to be tended and a flower garden to be looked after. In addition to all this, one at least of the children will probably be ill enough during the course of the year to need constant attention for a fortnight, and the others will have sufficient ailments to "upset the house" on many different occasions. Moreover, some neighbour is certain to be in need of a great deal of help, and there will almost inevitably be claims on her from elderly members of her own or her husband's

family. Finally,—and this is especially the case in towns,—the husband may be fond of taking her and the children out with him, and not only on Bank Holidays but on any fine Saturday and Sunday they must all be ready to make a public appearance. This is far from being a grievance, but it means an amount of planning and contriving of which the old-fashioned working-man's wife knew very little ; if one or two of the younger children were well enough dressed to go out with their father, it was all that was expected of her.

Is it any wonder that such a woman—and many are struggling under far worse difficulties—cooks as little as she can instead of as much ?

When the children are older, the very same woman may devote a large part of her time to cooking. I knew one who happened to have seven children in rather rapid succession, and while they were small very little cooking was done except when the father was at home to bear part of the domestic burden, and later on dinner was often cooked by the eldest boy under his mother's directions. At the present moment she has three sons at work besides her husband ; they are all employed in different places, and except on two days in the week, "meals is going on pretty well all the time," but there are now two girls old enough to relieve her of part of the house work, the boys have been trained to do a

fair share, and she is justly proud of her management. I once suggested to her that a plate of meat and vegetables and gravy could be kept hot over a saucepan of boiling water, and she crushed me by saying, "My children wouldn't eat it done that way ; the gravy dries up. I heat the gravy in a little saucepan, and pour it on boiling at the last minute."

The extreme irregularity of many working-men's hours, especially the superior ones sent here and there on their employer's business, is another reason why wives who may know how to cook economically, and who have all the means of doing the work, nevertheless resort to the frying-pan and the "bit o' steak" in despair.

"How do you manage?" I asked the exceptionally intelligent and well-educated wife of an artisan, when she told me that sometimes her husband would be at home at five o'clock or even earlier, and then for three or four weeks would vary from that time to one o'clock in the morning, when he might arrive on foot from some distant suburb, having missed the last train. "It's almost past managing," she replied. "Sometimes I get a good dinner that will keep an hour or two without hurting much, and then I find he's had it somewhere else, or that he's too tired to eat it. He doesn't like soup or stews, and he doesn't like cold meat, not

even with a salad and a nice cup of coffee ; and one can't have pies for ever. When I was in service my master used to send a wire if he was hindered, and say what he meant to do ; but we can't well afford that, so we just have to do the best we can."

The labourer's wife who knows that her husband will hardly vary ten minutes in the time of his arrival, and that he will be perfectly content with hot potatoes and gravy and cold bacon and tea six days out of seven, is often far less to be pitied than the skilled artisan's wife who has to ask herself, " Will he eat it ? " three times as often as she puts the query, " Can I afford to buy it for him ? "

The dearness of fuel is another reason why little cooking is done. In the north of England, where coal is cheap, hot meals are far more frequently prepared than in the south, where it is usually at least double the price and there is less money available for the purchase. It might be argued that more hot food is eaten because the climate makes it indispensable, but the west of England has the advantage of cheaper coal than the east, and has also a much higher average temperature ; moreover, no one acquainted with the poorest houses in both districts can deny that the art of cooking is much more generally practised among cottagers in the western counties than in the eastern.

The badness of the stoves supplied in working-

class dwellings aggravates the difficulty with regard to fuel. In the country there is often nothing but an extravagant open stove with an oven so small that it suggests that it was simply made for the chief purpose to which it is put—stewing tea. I have known a mother (formerly “a good plain cook” and a most capable person) obliged to boil the food all together in one huge pot hung over the flames. In another house, where the mother was a skilled cook and absolutely devoted to the interests of her family, the eldest daughter told me: “The children can have meat and vegetables for dinner, or they can have pudding, but they can’t have both, because it isn’t possible to cook it.” In towns the stoves are more promising in appearance and less voracious, but they are absurdly small for family use, and practically they are often unmanageable, and drive the most painstaking of wives to despair. The same amount of coal will one day heat the stove fiercely and dangerously, and the next will not keep a single saucepan boiling, while food placed in the oven will turn sour before it is cooked. There is also a general lack of cool larders and dry store cupboards, and without these economical catering is impossible, however much care and trouble may be expended on the details of housekeeping.

Superficially this defence of the working-man’s

wife may appear like that of the celebrated Roumanian peasant who was accused by a neighbour of borrowing a bucket and breaking it, and who solemnly averred, firstly, that she had never had the bucket; secondly, that it was broken when it was lent to her; and thirdly, that it was absolutely flawless when she returned it: but different parts of the apology apply to different persons, or to different periods of their life.

As we began by stating, the most deep-lying cause why the ordinary woman cooks so little is neither laziness nor specific ignorance of the art, it is because she and her husband underestimate the importance of food; and it is quite possible that many of her self-constituted advisers overestimate it. In all attempts to instruct the poor or to improve their condition directly, we must remember that although they may not have studied "fluxions or paradoxes, or such inflammatory branches of learning," their interest in their own concerns is naturally so much stronger and so much more constant than ours that they may see their lives more as a whole than we do, and that our spasmodic efforts in this or that direction may upset the balance which they are rightly, and with some success, striving to maintain. Thrift, for example, is an excellent thing, but the poor can tell you much of its ugly and soul-destroying side, and

they could bring forward equally serious drawbacks to nearly all the virtues and duties urged on them from above.

Old-fashioned schoolmasters strongly disapproved of giving boys much to eat, and those who did not gain or save a penny by the enforced abstemiousness of their pupils held as firm convictions on this point as Messrs. Creakle and Squeers. Old-fashioned parents held much the same views. With many of the facts that influenced these persons always before them, can one be surprised when, in response to the recommendation to spend less on mere ornament and more on food, some of the best mothers of the wage-earning class reply, "Children don't want a great lot of eating. It only seems to go to their heads and make them troublesome. As soon as they go to work I feed 'em accordin'. If you dress them nicely it keeps them in better comp'ny instead of running the roads with a lot of young roughs"?

It is considered a point of filial duty for children to prefer their mother's cooking to that of any other person. The bitterest complaint I ever heard from a mother was: "They think such a lot of anything they get when they're out, even if it's nothing but a jam tart." I remember a housemaid rather noted for her fastidiousness, telling me with gusto: "Our favourite dinner at home used to be a

penn'orth of rice with a ha'porth of sugar and a ha'porth of milk stirred in." This was for six children and their mother, but was probably supplemented by bread.

All advocates of State feeding of school children should remember how soon a privilege is taken as a right. In a poor district where Christmas presents had with some difficulty been collected for the children attending a mission Sunday school, one mother was so much displeased with the cheap quality of the doll given to her little daughter that she returned it the next day with a most insulting message. How long would it be before such a tender parent came raging to the Committee, pouring out fiery complaints of the dinner that they "had been and give" her cherished children?

Knowing what human nature is, can one wonder at the ease with which the poor may be pauperised? I remember reading an appeal to a benevolent society designed to give temporary relief to struggling members of the professional classes: "His mother [an aged widow with a pension] being now dead, applicant has no further means of support." The applicant was a man of thirty, who did not even pretend to be in bad health.

VIII

WHAT IS CHARITY?

WHAT is meant by charity? How should we define it if we were guided solely by the deeds done in its name? What conception do the children of the present day form of its meaning? Unless the private teaching that they receive acts as a corrective, their ideas must be a confused jumble of fancy fairs, theatricals, tableaux vivants, and the delights of begging from door to door for subscriptions or attacking and pertinaciously worrying all passers-by. Not long since in a garrison town I saw a showily dressed girl of twelve or thirteen begging with equal boldness from men, women, and boys. She seemed denuded of all natural modesty, and I was relieved to see that she could blush even from annoyance, as she did when an old lady, affecting to believe that she was begging on her own account, said coldly, "I never give money to children in the street."

One day a child-collector came to my house and

asked for a subscription. I could not give her my opinion without reflecting upon the discretion of the parents who allowed her to undertake such an office, but knowing that she was liberally supplied with pocket-money, which she spent in an entirely wasteful and self-indulgent fashion, I said, "The object is indeed a good one, and I am glad that you feel interested in it. To every threepence that you will give out of your own allowance, I will most willingly add a shilling." I was never called on to keep my promise.

The mothers of the present generation read *Ministering Children*, and learnt that personal service, personal sacrifice, and modest self-effacement were indispensable parts of charity. Their grandmothers learnt the same in *The Fairchild Family*, and their great-grandmothers were taught the lesson with equal clearness by Hannah More. The child of to-day knows a shorter road, and is openly encouraged to hope that its name, and even its photograph, will appear in the newspapers either as the youngest, or the first, or the most successful collector—or at least as the child of its father.

A considerably older girl implored me to work for a bazaar "in which mother is taking so much interest." If the mother had asked me herself, I might have sacrificed my principles to spare her

feelings, but I thought the girl would be able to understand how the matter looked from a different point of view, and told her some of the many objections to raising money in such an indirect, laborious, and costly fashion, and finished by offering her a sum far larger than any profit likely to be obtained on the needlework she wished me to supply. "Mother won't think it at *all* the same, and she is *so* much interested, you really *might*." "By the way, you did not tell me the object of the bazaar?" "Oh—er—I don't know." "Perhaps your mother does?" I suggested drily. "I'm not sure. Mrs. Davenham asked her to help, and she's *so* much interested," and so on *da capo*.

In a certain small village where there was a handsome schoolroom always at liberty for evening concerts, lectures, etc., some busybody would not be content without a Parish Hall, which was to be "the centre of social union." She was an influential person, and the subscriptions soon amounted to a sum amply sufficient to build a hall of the size and style required for a village of some six or eight hundred inhabitants, the usual proportion of whom were infants under seven years of age content with the parental doorstep. But the busybody could not be satisfied with such an insignificant building. Would not critics say, "Why have it at all? It is no better than the schoolroom"?

When apparently complete, the building was over £200 in debt. Then it was discovered that a hall only a third part filled is a dreary and depressing sight for the public entertainer, and a curtain was bought at a cost of twelve pounds to divide it across the middle, and a bazaar was held to raise funds to stencil and otherwise decorate the walls. A little later on there was a "unique opportunity" of buying at a cost of a hundred guineas gates "warranted to be worth £150," and it was hastily seized.

Now for many years in that village the word "charity" has been attenuated to the exclusive meaning of paying off the debt on this hall, and it is being done mainly by theatricals, which afford a well-subsidised amusement to the richest and idlest persons in the parish. On one occasion I remember that the tickets for the entertainment were five shillings each. "There must be a large profit if they all give their services for nothing," I said to a lady of narrowly limited means, sighing over the moral obligation of buying three of these tickets. "Nominally they do," she replied, "but it means that for six weeks or two months they spend as much as they choose on cabs and telegrams and telephones and postage, at the expense of the charitable public. Out of this fifteen shillings, how much do you imagine will go to pay off the

debt? On the last occasion the takings were thirty-five pounds and the expenses a trifle under thirty. At the same rate the hall would gain considerably if I made a direct subscription of half a crown. And fifteen shillings does not cover *my* expense, for I must pay five more for a cab. I could very well walk, but evening dress is *dé rigueur*."

"In *our* parish," said a listener, "there was a bazaar to furnish the newly built vicarage. It was on a large scale, and two prominent members of the congregation quarrelled bitterly some days before it took place, because they could not agree as to whether the profits should be spent at Maple's or some newer place. The takings were eighty-five pounds, and the profits nearly paid for a very mean-looking arm-chair, but not quite. My husband had to pay an extra eight shillings or they would have had an even worse one."

Not long ago, at a school where the waste from the boys' plates had always been given to a charitable institution, an order was issued that the refuse was to be sold. A loud outcry was raised, and the fear expressed that the pupils would thereby be taught mean, grasping ways, instead of the charity and generosity becoming their age and station. If it were the only alternative, I should prefer lads of "the late Juke

Judkins" type to those who had been trained to believe that there was generosity in destroying food and charity in giving away broken victuals.

The giving of coppers and threepenny pieces by handsomely dressed people is as purely symbolical a sacrifice as the Chinaman's burnt paper. The only excuse is the impossible frequency with which we are asked for subscriptions. If we once grasped the elementary fact that a donation of a sovereign to one institution means a larger net profit than twenty separate shillings given to twenty distinct charities, we should surely find strength of mind to reduce the number of our gifts and correspondingly increase their value.

"We are nearly out of debt," said the Treasurer of a local charity; "only ten pounds to the bad." "What a pity that the debt is not completely extinguished," I replied. "If people had only known, they would gladly have made a further effort." In his private and in his business life he was one of the most strictly honourable men I have ever met, but, "in the name of charity," this was his reply: "Oh no, no; I am perfectly satisfied. It is always a mistake for any institution to be out of debt. The public would lose interest in it at once."

Another man borrowed money at four per cent. from leading members of the congregation in order

to enlarge the church. When remonstrated with by an outsider on the plain business ground that it was an expensive method, he replied instantly, "Oh, we don't calculate on paying the interest more than once or twice. We didn't like to ask them for the money outright, but they will soon make us a present of it to save further trouble." In his professional life this man, for honour's sake, had recently sacrificed a large sum of money and a position that it had taken him years of hard work to attain, but he did not seem to have even the haziest idea that it was possible for charity to "behave herself unseemly."

The far-famed undergraduate who, being questioned as to the nature of Good Works, opined that "a few wouldn't do any harm," has always been held up as a model of caution, but at heart he must have been as rash as a Labour Member or even an early Edwardian poor-law guardian. Philanthropists, whether chronic or acute cases, would do well to remember not only that good works have demonstrably the nature of sin, but that they are commonly inspired by more impulse and worked out with less thought, retrospect, and foresight than is the case with actions of a specifically selfish or of a purely business character.

Consider for a moment one of the most recent

of benevolent schemes: the establishment on a large scale of charitable institutions for the medical treatment, maintenance, and education of crippled children. Some of its supporters have boldly described this project as "getting at the root of the evil," "fighting disease at its origin," and so forth. Even metaphorically a child is usually regarded as a flower, not a root; and as a matter of fact, a crippled child is mainly a result, not an origin. If all the crippled children in the entire country could be collected into institutions, and supposing (however contrary to all previous experience, to all knowledge of child-nature and child-needs and the pitifully insufficient response of the most conscientious officialdom to their many-sided claims) that the patients are enormously benefited, should we have done anything at all to change the conditions under which those children were produced, or to prevent another seven thousand candidates from being ready for relief years before the original seven thousand had been dealt with?

Work among the more ignorant classes of wage-earners (not always the poorest) soon convinces one that there are deep moral and mental causes for all this physical suffering among their children. Nothing but knowledge and care can prevent the production of cripples, and the permanent crippling, blinding, deafening, maiming, and distortion of

children far more frequently arises from insufficient mental development on the part of the mother than from lack of means or lack of affection in either parent. There is not only too little cut-and-dried knowledge but an almost entire absence of that imaginative foresight which leads more educated parents to believe in and dread the ultimate results of ailments, incapacities, and injuries more than they dread fatigue and expense to themselves or the temporary pain or inconvenience of their children. "Look at that boy," I said to the daughter of a country surgeon; "his crutch is four inches too short for him. His spine will certainly be injured. And I saw a boy yesterday in need of a temporary support for his ankle. He will end as a hopelessly distorted cripple." "My father's patience is worn out," she replied. "Over and over again he has exerted his influence to get proper appliances for village children, and then they cry and protest they can get on better without them, and the parents yield at once. And then, in other cases, they look on the appliance as a sort of charm, and insist on its being worn when the child has grown so much that the pressure comes in the wrong place and does serious harm."

The ignorance of the parents is often so great that they entirely neglect small injuries, and if later on they try to trace cause and effect, they

ascribe results to trivial occasions that were in no sense causes. Benny, for example, has hip disease. This is not regarded as a form of tuberculosis fostered by bad air and unsuitable food and clothing; it is "all along of his having fell down one slippery day when he were about five year old," ignoring the fact that if a healthy child falls down, he picks himself up, and that is the end of the matter; while if a delicate child were kept extremely quiet for a few days after a little accident of this nature, all danger of an abscess forming would probably disappear. Tommy has meningitis because "a rough boy, who was too big, and hadn't ought to ha' bin with the infants, knocked him over a form." There is no realisation of the simple truth that the ordinary termination of such an incident would have been that the pupil teacher would have consoled and silenced Tommy by slapping his aggressor, and that their respective sisters would have threatened to tell their respective mothers, and omitted to do so.

The anecdotic system of argument is never convincing; but, as a traveller, almost a resident, in that large (and for the most part tolerably comfortable) area which the charitable public persists in marking, "Very dangerous; go as fast as you can; nature of inhabitants inexplicable, no light can be thrown by history or psychology;

resort to experiment—the older and more frequently discredited, the newer and more hopeful,” one is obliged to bring forward personal experience of that district in order to obtain a hearing and to furnish a common language in which to argue our common humanity. The professional philanthropist is the worst of cynics, because a class-cynic. The virtues by which the world is to be saved cannot be found below a certain social, or at least monetary, level. On wages of less than three pounds a week men and women cannot possibly help themselves or do anything for the benefit of their children, while the entire scheme of the universe can readily be altered by the spare guineas and during the spare moments of those with a larger income and immeasurably less interest in the persons concerned.

Some years ago a father and mother, kept above the lowest poverty line by industry and prudence, had a little daughter born with a disease which was known to be incurable, and which caused not only the deprivation of many of the natural joys of child life but pain which even the most skilled treatment could barely alleviate. A small but militant minority would thus give their judgment on the case: “Life is a curse to the child. Let us relieve her from the intolerable burden laid upon her innocent shoulders.” Less extreme rebels

against the conditions on which life and health are passed on to successive generations proclaim hastily : " Let us put her into a Home. If her parents feel for her, it is a useless torture for them ; if they do not, their indifference must add still more to her sufferings." Logicians tell us that " all error lies in generals," but in popular arguments it is to be found at least equally in wild indulgence in the fallacy of the excluded middle. Had the parents been left in ignorance of the cause of the child's marred existence, it is difficult to say what might have happened ; but a suspicion arose in the father's mind that he himself was to blame. He asked a medical man a plain question, and received an unusually plain answer, and from that moment it was the inward determination and ceaseless effort of his life to make atonement by providing every alleviation within his power. He not only worked hard and spent freely, but he forced his unaccustomed brain to study ; and because of the concentration of his thoughts and the intensity of his desire, he ultimately succeeded in bringing more relief to the child than the most advanced specialists would have thought probable. When asked any questions as to his family, he replied, with the outspokenness of his class, " Our first and only one. I could not bear to see another child go through it." Directly and indirectly many

hundreds of uneducated men and women have learnt that child's history : can it be said that she has suffered in vain ?

A certain amount of hardness, if accompanied by foresight and an intellectual appreciation of the case, is sometimes less difficult to deal with than the strongest maternal affection minus these less attractive qualities. A boy and a girl belonging to different families received somewhat similar injuries to their right hands. The girl's mother was passionately devoted to all her children, and in her care for their moral and religious training was far above the ordinary standard, but because the child's hand " if let alone " caused no pain, it was almost impossible to persuade her that it was her duty to allow surgical treatment ; and if the little patient had not chanced to have an affection for the nurse sent to dress the wound, and a consequent willingness to endure the necessary discomfort, permanent crippling must have resulted. The boy's mother was decidedly below the average in maternal tenderness, but she very quickly grasped that unless the full powers of the hand could be preserved he would never be able to follow his father's trade, a fairly profitable one, and she needed no further stimulus. When at last the hand was pronounced to be completely cured, we calculated that she had dressed it twelve hundred

times. In the same town a brusque, active, stirring mother of six sons and two daughters was told that her youngest boy suffered from a disease which would make him a hopeless cripple. Her grief took the immediate form of anger; she slapped and scolded all her children with more vehemence than before, and it is to be feared that not even the invalid was exempt. There was no compensating tenderness in the father, and altogether it seemed a home the destruction of which one could have borne with a certain amount of equanimity. Nevertheless, she had the child's interests at heart. She studied the matter, and adopted a common-sense treatment which had just begun to recommend itself to a few leading medical men. Some months ago I received a message from her to remind me that the lad was nearly eighteen, and to assure me that he had grown "as strong as his brothers"—no mean standard. One more example of what can be done by direct teaching: A child, owing to gross neglect, was in imminent danger of losing the sight of both eyes. The doctor, called in by the mother when the twelfth hour had almost sounded, saw scarcely a glimmer of hope, but he was so much enraged by her apathy and fatalism that he told her that if the child became blind it would be entirely her own fault, and ordered her to apply certain treatment every

two hours night and day for an indefinite period. Greatly alarmed by his vehement outburst, she carried out his instructions to the letter, and with perfect success. Six months later she was to be seen pointing to the child's bright eyes as an example of what could be done by constant care, and to herself as a born-and-bred exponent of never-say-die principles; but she was generally frank enough to add that if her hearers would begin earlier they could do as much with two applications a day as she had done with twelve.

Every one of these children—and they are fair samples—were, or could easily have been made, candidates for a National Cripples' Home.

"At least the children must not suffer" is a favourite argument of those direly suspicious of the value of all family life but that of their own class. It has never been Nature's plan to exempt children from suffering, and although we may call her methods clumsy, wasteful, and cruel, they are at least workable and yield a balance of advantage. If we tried to interpret dumb Nature's laws to her more backward pupils, might it not be more generally profitable than if the same amount of energy were devoted to attempts to nullify these laws? At the beginning of this century we were promised "a masculine age," but we have never yet been more in need than we are now of the

warning: "To develop sympathy without developing foresight is just one of the one-sided developments which fail to constitute a real advance in morality."

In barest justice to the working classes it must be owned that their treatment of crippled children, as of all others, generally errs on the side of excessive indulgence, but it is half unconsciously based upon the wholly gratuitous assumption that the former will die before reaching maturity. When trying to establish rational diet and rational treatment, one has not only to oppose the unreasoning tenderness of parents, but the affection of bachelor uncles, childless aunts, elder sisters, and even brothers, and the kindly obstructiveness of neighbours who "can't abide to see a sick child crossed." What is needed is education of the parents, so that the supply may be cut off at its source, and education of the children without removing them from the homes where they are at once teachers and taught. Nowhere else will they meet with the same love, or develop morally to the same degree, nor even receive as practical a preparation for the hampered, difficult life that must always be theirs. They have been wronged, but we must let them bear their wrongs openly lest we should be lulled into a false security and more widespread evils should ensue. "Out of

sight, out of mind." While cripples exist, let them be seen in our daily lives, and not herded together like criminals in barracks, the very existence of which would rapidly pass out of public consciousness, and never be thought of again until they reappeared in our daily substitute for thought under the sensational heading of "Gigantic Frauds," or "A Nation of Cripples."

The great mass of benevolent people seem to have no dread of the indirect results of their well-meant labours, while the minority have learnt to fear these results so much that it is only with an effort that they can maintain the belief that they are not entirely and inevitably injurious, or give admittance to the suggestion that if they are so it must be because the work has been done on wrong lines. If the results of philanthropic action are mainly bad, it is not that men have erred in striving enthusiastically for the supposed benefit of humanity instead of remaining either blandly or querulously quiescent, but because they were starting from wrong principles. Generally speaking, their opinion of their fellow-creatures has been too low, not too high. They talk about faith in the possibilities of human nature and then act as if they believed it capable of sinking to infinite depths while incapable as a whole of reaching anything like the level on which they flatter them-

selves they are standing. Despising our neighbour, not only as he is—which might sometimes have a shadow of excuse—but as he might be, is the root of much of our legislation and many of our vaunted and flaunted charities.

Sixteen years ago I was about to visit a small but rather well-known town, and an old acquaintance said to me, “ You will find it such a splendidly managed place. The principal landlord will not tolerate a pawnbroker, and if he could prevent it, he would not have a single public-house. As it is, they are very strictly limited.” It sounded promising, but although I had not fully and in detail realised that no one can be made virtuous by Act of Parliament, I was haunted by the memory of a story told me by my next-door neighbour. During one of his many visits to America he was taking a three days’ railway journey and at luncheon asked the negro waiter to bring him a bottle of stout. He was absorbed in a newspaper, which related more of his wife’s family than he had heard in twenty years, and more of his own than he had known in fifty, and suddenly woke up to the fact that a coffee-pot was in front of him, and pushed it irritably away : “ We are in Maine, sah,” explained the waiter. “ If you *must* bring me coffee, is that the smallest reason for bringing it to me stone-cold ? ” The man smiled broadly, and

checked all further complaint by pouring out the coffee with a fine head to it. With this in the background of my thoughts I asked, "Have you ever visited the houses in the poorer parts of the town? What kind of a life do the women and children lead?" "No, I have never been there; but one does not need to do that in order to know what a difference it must make in their lives, no pawning and no drunkenness." The day before I started, a woman I have never met since said, in the pauses of punching in the background to a piece of wood-carving, "You'll find it an awful place. It is exceedingly difficult to get a licence there, and of course that means a lot of dens where drink is sold secretly; and to make up for the risk and trouble, they sell nothing but poisonously bad spirits instead of a great deal of ordinary beer and a little moderately bad whisky and gin. And then the dead set against pawn-brokers. No doubt pawning is a miserably foolish and extravagant system, but *on ne détruit qu'en remplaçant*. Nothing has taken the pawnbroker's place, and so his agents come thirty or forty miles by train, tap at the doors, and ask the people if they are sure they don't want to pawn something. Or else three or four women join together to pay the railway fare and expenses of a neighbour, generally a widow with very little money and plenty of

unoccupied time. It ends in their paying about fifty per cent. instead of the seventeen to twenty-four that it usually works out at." "Have you ever been there?" "Never; if one knows those two facts, and also that wages are irregular and nominally high, one can picture all the rest."

My first visit to the town was too brief for me to arrive at any conclusion, but six years later I learnt definitely that the broad lines drawn by her trained imagination were only too true: the sordid and ugly details readily slipped into place. It seems incredible, but many of the oldest inhabitants, persons whose names were to be found on every subscription list and lent prestige to every charitable committee, entirely agreed with my first informant: these excellent regulations existed, their effect must be good, and the working-class wives and children as a whole must be in a state to be envied by all the rest of the world. I said to one of those who claimed unstinted admiration for everything within a radius of two miles, "I am acquainted with several poor districts in London, and with garrison, seaport, and cathedral towns,—and with some which have the disadvantage of being all three,—but I have never seen anything to compare with the drunkenness, wife-beating, and child-neglect that there is here." "Should you say that there is any

drunkenness here?" she asked, astonished at my vehemence but unshaken in her opinion. It has since occurred to me that most long-established townspeople suffer from a kind of moral presbyopia; they are so exceedingly anxious to reform other towns, especially great cities, and so oblivious of their own weak points. A few months ago a "prominent citizen" appealed from the platform for funds for the N.S.P.C.C., funds entirely to be spent in other places, because "of course we have nothing of that kind going on here." His blindness must have been to a great extent wilful, for the Society's inspector told me: "As soon as I could get a quiet word with him, I said, 'Come with me, sir, and within a pistol-shot I'll show you two of the worst cases I've ever seen, and I've seen a good deal in the course of my life. If you haven't had your dinner already, you'll eat none to-day.' And he wouldn't go!"

A little attention might most profitably be diverted from the oldest districts of the largest cities to small towns and rapidly growing neighbourhoods. Not long since, in a town numbering less than four thousand inhabitants, I found a slum that could not easily have been equalled in London or Manchester, and in a town whose name I had never before heard I was told by a newly appointed local authority that the over-

crowding was a scandal. In one house containing four very small and low rooms he had found six adults and sixteen children, and it required several visits and many threats of prosecution before he could even discover which of the adults was responsible for the three most neglected of the children.

Indirect results of a beneficial nature seem sometimes almost fortuitous. In a town where a large proportion of the wage-earners lived so far from their work that midday dinner was an impossibility for them, I had noted the bad effect that this had upon the meals of the women and children and the slackness and idling over house work partly caused by insufficient occupation and partly by unnourishing food. What was to be done? Neither time nor strength would permit the men to take the double journey on foot; their wages although regular were small, and the tram fares would have been twopence a day for some and fourpence for others, and neither hours nor routes suited the workers in question. The general system of the trams, in fact, was only adapted to men who came from a considerable distance and saved the fares on their rent. There was a small omnibus company in the town, slowly but not silently fading away. Suddenly the brilliant idea struck the proprietors that these

old-fashioned vehicles could be used to suit the convenience of the short-distance men, taking them as nearly as possible from door to door at a halfpenny a head. An enormous impulse to domestic industry (in the right sense of the words) has been given, and the mingled blessings resulting from punctuality, hot food, regular family intercourse, and "paying as you go," are widespread. Needless to say, there are persons who would—light-heartedly and with a good conscience—have risked all the indirect results of subsidising the trams at the general expense of the ratepayers, or "taking them over" and trying to make them do work for which they were unfitted. In the country I have known five middle-aged and elderly workmen, too stiff for cycling, able to undertake well-paid work six or seven miles from their cottages owing to their co-operative ownership of a horse and cart. I believe the horse was over twelve when they bought him, but as he is reasonably well fed and they are content to jog along quietly, reading and smoking, he will not, as they express it, owe them very much by the time he dies.

A curious instance of indirect results was brought under my notice by a Frenchman well acquainted with his eastern neighbours. "In our army the men are often harassed and worried

and sometimes insulted, but there is very little personal violence compared with what you find among the Germans." "How do you account for it?" "Well," he replied drily, "if you ill-treat a German soldier beyond the point he finds endurable, he shoots himself. The Frenchman would shoot someone else—to begin with, at any rate."

The consequences of shorter hours of labour are not entirely beneficent to wage-earners past their first youth, not merely because many of them do not know how to occupy their leisure and are too set in their ways to learn, but because of the difficult mental and physical adaptation implied by turning from long hours modified by dawdling to briefer but more strenuous labour. I remember a large establishment where the hours averaged about nine and a half all through the year and were about to be reduced to eight. "Look at that!" one of the officials exclaimed to me. "If they think we can afford that kind of thing out of an eight-hour day, they're very much mistaken. They won't find it all joy, I can tell them!" I looked: for some purpose a small piece of quartering had been needed; one man held the wood in place with his foot, one man leisurely sawed it through, one man stood waiting to receive it when finished,

and all three talked. Two or three years later I was told that all the elderly men continued to dislike the change, and that those who were even approaching middle-age had found it a great strain.

The indirect effects of regular-attendance medals upon the statistics of measles, diphtheria, etc., might be well worth inquiring into. My advice to every school nurse when searching for cases of incipient illness is: next to the most neglected children, give your closest attention to the best dressed and most anxiously cared-for. The neglected child will often go to school when feeling wretchedly ill because it has nothing more attractive to do; the ambitious child of ambitious parents will conceal symptoms of illness with the most sedulous care if he has a medal in view; while the average child of the average mother would simply sit down and cry until given permission to stay at home and sit by the fire.

We all have our favourite charities, our favourite hobbies, our favourite line on which to urge forward meddlesome legislation. Surely it would be wise to stop occasionally and ask ourselves, What are the indirect results of—for example—soup kitchens, free boots, public entertainments for cripples, recreation schools, and comfortable shelters for tramps?

On the outskirts of a wealthy town I was shown

a row of cottages and told that nearly every year they were flooded for several weeks. "And yet there is not a single one vacant," I remarked. "They must be most unhealthy, but I suppose the rent is temptingly low?" "On the contrary," replied my informant, who had known the district well for some forty years, "On the contrary, rent is at a premium. You see, it is well known that directly the floods are out a subscription list will be opened 'to cope with the exceptional distress and lamentable destruction of property.' When the few sticks of furniture have been handsomely replaced and the balance divided, the tenants think it almost a point of honour to move on 'and give someone else a chance,' but if all the assistance were given in money, they would probably remain, and the same stage property would be 'washed away' time after time. From one point of view, the most serious part of the matter is the number of persons who are simply bribed and tempted to ruin their health by living there. Some die, but others linger as fresh food for the epicure in charities."

Not long since a woman doctor wrote to me : "My first dressership in the out-patient department of a general hospital made me realise how much we are doing towards undermining the independence of the people who come to us."

At no point have benevolent people more nearly succeeded in pauperising the poor than with regard to medical attendance. Common humanity, of course, dictates that such assistance should be within the reach of all, and in the present state of society it is reasonable that the very poorest should receive it gratis, and persons with an income from all sources of less than 25s. a week for a very small fee if paid in the form of an insurance. But is there the smallest excuse why the families of men in receipt of thirty, forty, or more shillings a week should expect to have medical advice freely, or for a ludicrously inadequate sum ?

Last autumn a woman I knew very well wished to consult a doctor. She had been married ten or eleven years, but it was the first time she had needed one. There were no children, the weekly income was just under 30s., and was earned in a neighbourhood cheap as far as all the necessaries of life were concerned. The husband had never had a day's illness since his childhood, and had never been out of work since he was a lad of eighteen. She did not care to employ local talent, although there were two doctors of sufficient reputation to be consulted in the gravest crises by the wealthiest persons in a large provincial town, and she went to her parents in London, the bare travelling expenses being 26s. I do not know the

parents' exact income, but they had no children dependent on them, they were always well dressed and looked thoroughly well fed, and they paid 7s. 6d. rent for three large rooms, which is considered a liberal allowance of space for two elderly persons. On her return from town a fortnight later she told me that she had first seen the doctor "just for a few minutes," and had then gone to his house, accompanied by her mother, and he had "thoroughly examined her." For his opinion, which proved to be perfectly correct, she paid the sum of sixpence, and she spoke to me with the deepest and most self-righteous scorn of people better off than herself "who won't never pay nothing to a doctor, and if they give twopence, expect to get the bottle o' med'cine in."

One unlooked-for result of so much free and tenth-part-paid medical attendance is that poor but independent persons have to pay at a very high rate for all they receive. A few months ago a woman of eighty, living with her husband of about the same age in a four-roomed cottage at half a crown a week, fell down the rickety, ladder-like stairs and injured her shoulder. The doctor visited her for less than a fortnight, and did not come every day, and then sent in a bill for £5, 0s. 6d. She at once drew £5 from the savings bank, and sent it to him with a message that if he wanted

the sixpence he could come and fetch it himself. The private income possessed by the old couple was extremely small, and they both still worked for a considerable part of their subsistence. In another instance a middle-aged cottager had to pay £2, 12s. 6d. for three visits and a little medicine.

I hear much of the noble generosity and disinterestedness of doctors, but it seems to me that most of them receive as large incomes as any other professional men. When, chiefly to save themselves trouble, or to gain experience or a reputation, they attend the poor for nothing, they do not abjure that portion of their gains—they simply take it from the next person who can or will pay them. It is a kind of Robin Hood morality, and they are often more mistaken as to the means than as to the good-will of their patients.

There can be no doubt that the out-patient department of hospitals is seriously abused, and the patients and their friends not seldom waste an amount of time and money over their attendance which would have been sufficient to pay for the services of the fully qualified practitioner living not 200 yards from their door. I knew an artisan's wife who week after week took her young son to a hospital where she paid twopence for a bottle of medicine. She had to spend ten-pence on omnibus fares, and was often obliged to

wait four hours for the minute-and-a-half interview with the doctor. At the end of that time she generally "felt that faint" and was unable to return home without refreshment, usually paying sixpence for what she could have provided at home for three-halfpence. Simultaneously with these twopenny bottles of medicine, and of course unknown to the hospital authorities, the lad was swallowing expensive quack remedies, one of which cost 20s. and did him so much harm that for some weeks the mother was afraid to try any further experiments.

Nor is the multiplication of cottage hospitals an unmixed blessing in rural districts. I have received bitter complaints that doctors now commonly decline to attend cottagers unless they are literally unable to leave their beds. Medical and surgical cases alike, and of nearly all degrees of gravity, have to find their way as best they can to the surgery possibly five miles or more from their home. Every really zealous doctor would insist on seeing patients in the environment in which they have to be nursed, in order that his advice may as far as possible meet all the circumstances of the case. What is the use of treating a man for consumption or rheumatism unless you go to his house and find out all that he is doing to aggravate the disease?

Club doctors are as a rule so overworked and underpaid that "a halfpenny diogenes" (diagnosis) is becoming a standing joke among working-men—a very grim one when viewed by its frequent results. And yet many of the middle classes, as ready as anyone else to be pauperised, are longing to insure themselves in a somewhat similar fashion. A short time ago I heard of a man in receipt of an income of £600 asking the best doctor in the place to enter into a contract to attend on him, his wife, four sickly children, and one servant for an inclusive fee of £5 per annum. He was hurt and astonished when the offer met with a civil refusal.

Needless to say, it is not only in the out-departments of hospitals that the pauperising tendency is at work. In my opinion, no one but the father or mother of a young family, and by no means all of these, should be admitted entirely without payment to any hospital ward, and especially no child of a legally dependent age. I remember observing a lively, healthy-looking little girl of nine or ten in a London hospital, and asked how long she had been there. To my utter astonishment—for it was a case of an ordinary nature and no great severity—I was told "Fourteen months," and on further inquiry learnt that she was one of a moderate-sized family, and her

father was in regular receipt of 35s. a week. Not one farthing had been paid by the parents towards the child's maintenance, nor had they even been asked to make a subscription. Very soon after, in another hospital, I came across a boy of fourteen who had been an in-patient for nine weeks owing to an injury which had occurred the first day he went to work. He was insured for 10s. a week (one single penny, by the way, was all that the insurance office had received). This money the parents were permitted to pocket, while the authorities were publishing most pathetic appeals for funds.

All children and dependents ought to be paid for in strict proportion to the income of their natural guardians, and the charge should never be less than the bare cost of maintenance (exclusive of rent) of a person in that class of life in their own home; even if it were but fifteen or eighteen pence a week, I would exact it. Strict rules ought also to be drawn up to meet the case of well-to-do persons carried to hospitals after meeting with a street accident. After remaining for days, and even weeks, members of the wealthier classes—and then only under moral pressure—will hand in a cheque which does not represent the tenth part of what their expenses would have amounted to if they had been conveyed immediately to their own homes.

With regard to the support of religious organisations, it cannot be said that the poor as a whole have ever been independent. Members of small and struggling sects often make genuine personal sacrifices to support the form of worship that they prefer, but the rich chapel pauperises as extensively as the rich church ; the poor are carefully encouraged in the belief that they are to receive everything and give nothing, and soon establish an exacting code of how much they may claim in return for the smallest amount of complaisance or outward conformity. "Ye—es," I heard a woman whining to a worried-looking deacon not any too well off himself, "Ye—es, they've been and sent me some grosheries and coal and a meat ticket, but none of them don't think for to ast how my rent is runnin' on," and she intimated clearly that she might be reluctantly compelled to attend some more liberal form of worship. But it was a man who succeeded in reducing the practice of conformity to a minimum. His wife attended chapel and he went nowhere, but he was regarded with profitable approval in certain quarters because he had announced that "if he went anywhere, it would be to church."

Every church and chapel has practically similar plans for battling "with the present distress," the same inability to look ahead, the same lack of moral courage and common-sense, and the same

essentially low and pessimistic views of human nature ; but the associations that seem to me the most injurious to thrift and foresight are those which treat childbirth not only as an undeserved but as a totally unexpected misfortune, which ought to loosen the purse-strings even of the most prudent as readily as the news of an earthquake or a destructive cyclone. They are not as far advanced as a poor woman of my acquaintance who remarked drily, "Children doesn't walk in unbeknownst ; they always gives you nine months' notice."

Next to this, if not before it, one must deprecate all charitable assistance given in their own homes to permanently invalidated married men. I have known families of from three to eight children born after their fathers became unable to work. These men were mainly supported in the name of religion, and their offspring for the most part had little joy in living and scanty prospect of ever benefiting the community to the extent of a year's steady work.

Another most injurious form of charity, when carried out on a large scale, is the provision of free clubs and recreation rooms. If these institutions were taken advantage of only by the poorest of the poor, there might be a large balance of advantage, but these rarely make use of them, or only for a short period immediately after their

foundation. They are used to a considerable extent, if not exclusively, by the most respectable people in the parish, and substantially injure their home life, and also help to render tolerable an insufficiency of house room which ought not to be endured for a moment, and which in many cases would not long be borne if it were not for the mistaken kindness of these alleviations.

I remember several times visiting an evening class for boys instructed gratuitously by two ladies. The subject was badly taught, the boys were under no discipline whatever, and therefore did not benefit even indirectly, and one had only to look at their clothing and listen to their conversation in order to realise that they were not neglected wastrels but lads with decent homes and parents capable of looking after them. Less than a mile away an old-established teacher of this very subject was receiving charitable assistance because he and his invalid wife were in actual want of food. I cannot still further point the moral by saying that he was a good teacher, but estimating the best exponent of the art I have ever seen at 100, I should put him down at 50, and the two well-meaning amateurs at about 10 for their knowledge and 5 for their power of imparting it. I have never visited a recreation school, but a lady who had done so told me that two people were engaged

to put away the toys when the children had finished with them—thus depriving them of the great lesson taught in every nursery.

✓ Even compulsory education has among its drawbacks the fact that the parents are relieved of their children's presence for so many waking hours that they voluntarily remain in quarters disproportionate to their real needs and their average income, bitterly complaining of the holidays and sending their children to school fully two years earlier than it is desirable they should go, and often making them attend when they are obviously failing and ought to remain at home.

We talk of the independence of the poor, but what value do we really place on it? Is it, in the cant of the day, considered a "national asset"? How many capable and charitable people can lay their hand on their conscience and declare that they are not flattered by helplessness?

Above all, what is meant by saying that children are a "burden" to their parents and a "gain" to the State? It seems suspiciously like the trivial fallacy: "You can afford to lose a little on each sale because of the enormous demand." If children are worth nothing to their parents they are worth nothing to anyone else, and the sooner the world comes to an end the better.

The real attitude of the unpauperised poor

towards their children was well expressed by a woman who had lost hers by emigration and who said, "I miss them, and I want them ; and I miss them mair than I want them." It was for love's sake that she mourned, not for money or service. "Endow motherhood !" Was ever a grosser insult breathed ? It is left for the charitable and religious public to make suggestions that the satirist would find too bitter and the libertine too licentious.

Sympathy is a necessary quality for all who would work among the poor, but it is sympathy with their life as a whole that is required, and not merely with its trials and misfortunes. All hypersensitive persons may safely console themselves with the belief that although they do not fully realise the bitterness that lies in other people's lot, they are often wholly ignorant of its consolations. I had a patient blind, paralysed, dependent on grudging service, irreligious, unintellectual, suffering from insomnia, and spending fully twenty out of the twenty-four hours in unbroken solitude. This man derived a simply incalculable amount of satisfaction from the mental contemplation of his own admirable leanness and other people's actual or presumed obesity. Whenever I had persuaded kind-hearted persons to spend an hour with him, his one invariable comment had reference to their

condition in this particular. On one occasion I asked, "What makes you think that Mrs. — is fat? Her rings are slipping from her fingers." "Ah, but she has a fat voice. Eh, but I'd rather be lean."

We all think that the poor are entitled to the benefit of the kindly impulses of our hearts, but we are strangely slow to believe that human fellowship demands that we should devote some part of our brains to them in addition. If a poor man complains of any hardship in his lot, do not let us ease our mind by giving him "the price of a pint," or whatever the equivalent may be in our social dealings with wage-earners. Let us try and understand his grievance, dwell on it, weigh it carefully, trace its cause one step backwards, forecast its immediate results, even if we can do no more. And it is by no means superfluous, even if we are convinced of the complainant's good faith, to remind ourselves daily of certain weighty words of Adam Smith: "The man scarce lives who is not more credulous than he ought to be, and who does not upon many occasions give credit to tales which not only turn out to be perfectly false, but which a very moderate degree of reflection and attention might have taught him could not well be true," while an earlier philosopher warns us further: "Quoique ces personnes n'aient point d'intérêt à

ce qu'ils disent, il ne faut pas conclure de la absolument qu'ils ne mentent point."

If we would avoid pauperising the poor, incredulity must take rank as one of the first of social virtues. Even at the present day accurate knowledge of widespread conditions of life takes a long time to pass from one class to another, and an evil may have reached its culminating point and may have found a natural remedy before we are well aware of its existence. Just as the trader follows the missionary, and the soldier too often follows the trader, social legislation comes fast on the heels of charitable impulse, and while the most foolish of individuals may be cheaply reconverted to some less harmful doctrine, a law once passed can rarely be wiped clean from the statute book.

Perhaps the most necessary mental acquirement for the poor at the present day is the ability to spread out unequal earnings equally over the entire year. The successful professional or business man has not only to do this but to average the gains of several years before he can fix a reasonable standard of living for himself and his family ; but when one considers that alternations of feast and famine, scrape and squander are by no means unknown among the middle classes, such self-control cannot immediately be expected of the lower divisions of workers, and unhappily it is those who

are most affected by seasonal trades. Foresight is still so little developed among the poor that few of them seem really to grasp the conditions of the occupation by which they earn their living. They do not, for example, regard themselves as persons earning £2 a week for forty weeks and a few uncertain shillings for the remaining twelve, and accept the fact that this means some 30s. a week all the year through. Eighty pounds a year is a sum on which a family of the ordinary size can live in comfort, but not if it is subjected to the wholly unnecessary and self-imposed tax of selling £20 or £30 worth of personal and household possessions every slack season for the price of old lumber, and gradually replacing them at full cost when trade is brisk. If men and their wives could but grasp what is meant by average wages, a constantly recurring excuse for State aid and charitable doles would be removed, and most of the hardships and degradations of their lives would be swept away.

IX

THE PRACTICAL DRAWBACKS OF SMALL FARMS

FARMING on a small scale is the favourite panacea at the present moment for many social ills, notably that of unemployment. That any man well understanding what he is about and desiring to purchase a parcel of land should be hindered from doing so is an injustice, and may be a personal misfortune ; but that large numbers of men should be bribed, persuaded, and entreated to enter on a life which they have scarcely one of the many qualities necessary for leading successfully, would amount to a national misfortune and stimulate no trade but that of the money-lender.

Some enthusiasts advocate small holdings because convinced that the produce would be incalculably greater than from large farms ; others because they imagine the life of the farmer to be so much more elevating than that of the wage-earner and that it creates a type of character in

which tireless energy is somehow combined with contentment ; others because, although recognising that the net profit to the community may be uncertain, and the life of the farmer and his wife narrow, harassing, and austere, the small holder breeds a hardy race of sons and daughters. The superfluous sons, one gathers, are to be food for powder, and no one troubles about the daughters.

Let us abandon theories for a few moments and come down to plain facts, most of them open to the observation of all men and women and many of them thrust upon the notice of every housekeeper living in the country or in any of those towns which remain in close touch with the country. We all recognise the economic disabilities of the small shopkeeper : in a village, or in the workmen's quarters of a town, he may manage to exist by charging high prices or by selling a poor quality of goods ; but unless in addition he shows prudence and even hard-heartedness in the matter of giving credit, he will soon be ruined. The small farmer's power to charge his immediate neighbours a high price is narrowly limited, and many of his goods have to be sold at low rates because they are obviously inferior to what can be brought to market by men with more command of labour, better appliances, and the mechanical skill arising from greater division

of employment. Go into the largest shop in a country town and ask for butter on what is locally called "the wrong day." If you are a good customer you will be told: "I wouldn't recommend you to buy more than you really need, m'm. To-morrow we shall have it in from a big dairy that we can depend on. What comes from the small farms is well enough if it can be sold and eaten within three days, but I end by passing a great deal of it over to the pastry cook. Why do I buy it? Well, all the winter they run into debt with me for groceries, and when the summer comes I must take what I can get or lose my money altogether. Just look at those two couple of fowls—breasts as keen as a knife, no pretence at being what you could call a good table bird; but it was a case of that or nothing." Go to another shop and repeat your demand, and you will be offered "lovely Danish." "But why sell foreign butter when you have scores of dairies close at hand?" "I find you can't depend on the small farmers' butter. I mean you can't even depend on *getting* it. One promises me ten pounds, another fifteen, and so on. Very well; one week they can't get anyone to do the churning, and another the wife is ill, or the butter "runs short," or the market price has dropped a penny and they suddenly decide that it isn't worth their

while to make it, and they don't even take the trouble to send me a postcard. I am sick of being found fault with by my customers for what I can't help, so I stick to Danish and a little Jersey once a week. New-laid eggs? Well, all I can guarantee is that they were not more than a week old when I bought them. The small farms only send them in once a week, and no one knows where they've been lying in the meantime. With careless treatment eggs can be older and mustier in three hours than they would be in three weeks if they were handled properly."

In one rural district where land was cheap and easily obtained, I bought eggs for several weeks from a small farmer. They tasted exactly as I have known eggs taste which came from an "Elephant and Castle" back yard, and were presented to me by most inconveniently grateful patients. In vain I reminded myself that the salesman had twenty-two acres of land on a wind-swept hill. No amount of faith could season those eggs, and at last I went to see where the fowls were kept. There were some fifty fowls in a house designed (by the advertiser) for forty, but in which I know from practical experience that not more than five-and-twenty should have slept. This house opened on to a wired run so small that when food was flung into it a large proportion never reached the

ground—the birds ate it off one another's backs. "Do you never let them out?" I asked. "Not often: they do such a lot of damage." I dared not ask how often the run was shifted, but if it had been done five times a day the birds could not have been in a sufficiently clean condition.

Go then to the corn stores, and ask the proprietor why he has sent your pony almost uneatable hay, and he tells you, in a burst of confidence which (from a country point of view) is full compensation for any injury you have suffered: "Truth is, the hay factors stole a march on me. They bought up nearly all that was worth having, and I have had to take some from the small farmers. They're always short of labour, and of course nothing can be properly done. Last time I was out that way I counted five haystacks with *chimneys* to 'em." In their unguarded moments all the other tradesmen will give you similar information.

With regard to the milk from small farms, the consumer who cannot be ignorant of its history needs the support of fatalism with regard to germs of disease and a robust indifference to mere dirt. From a lane which commanded a full view of the ceremony, I recently watched the milking of seven cows. On the arrival of the neighbour who was to take the cans into the town, an old man who

had recently been very ill and had distinguished himself by firmly declining to wash for nearly seven weeks, hurried to the meadow, and with the aid of a dog collected the animals, while a small boy recovering from whooping-cough went in search of his eldest brother and the one labourer employed. The father was dealing with manure half a field off, and dropped his fork and came forward as soon as the cows had been drawn up on the filthy piece of ground in front of the house where ducks, fowls, pigs, and geese were running about freely. His wife, who had been plucking fowls for market, came out with three pails, one of which she gave to her husband, and after hesitating for a minute or two, and observing the neighbour's impatience to be gone, took another herself and began milking. Presently the two young men arrived and she returned to the house, leaving them to finish the work. Not one of these four persons was even provided with an apron. Later on I asked the woman if the cows were yielding well. She sighed with fatigue and despondency : "They're not giving above half what they should be, but if cows don't have water, how can they give milk ? We've had to haul every drop for the last fortnight." "How does Mr. — manage with all his horses and cows ?" "Oh, he's been to a lot of expense. My husband says he doesn't

know *what* it didn't cost him ; but of course we can't go in for that. A week's dry weather we can stand, but if it goes beyond that we're about done for." Incidentally I asked how often cow-sheds had to be cleaned out. She brightened up as she thought of this blessing in her lot: "Not any oftener than you like. Over there"—indicating another county—"you've got to clean 'em out every day and limewash 'em every fortnight."

This spring in another district I was talking to a small farmer's wife, and she told me—half proud, half tearful : "We lost thirteen piglings last night. It turned very cold, and there wasn't anyone to do anything for them, and they all froze. We lost two lambs with the cold last week, and there's two more I don't think we shall save. My father had a big flock of sheep and he had three shepherds, and they took it turn and turn about every night at this time of the year ; but just for a few you can't afford to have even one shepherd, and if you did, he couldn't work night and day." "What an extraordinary mixture of birds and animals you keep close to the house," I ventured to remark. "Do they never try to kill one another ?" "They does sometimes, but it's so convenient to have them close at hand when they have to be fed. I've so many other things to see to, and it's such a business for a woman walking

about in all weathers. With animals to look after you don't get a bit of peace not from morning till night. I do a bit of sewing in the winter, but the rest of the time things have to hold together as best they can." The next day a turkey cock killed a very fine buff Orpington hen, and another lamb died. Within a week some enemy—nominally a fox—got into the hen roost, where there were large openings only stuffed up with rags; but a splendid peacock, which happened to have taken shelter there, shrieked so appallingly that the unidentified enemy killed it and fled. The first person who examined the corpse declared that it had been "gnawn," but the question has not yet been settled.

The small farmer and his family can no more help these things from happening than the small shopkeeper can keep his goods from becoming damaged by crowded storage and slow sale. How to supply sufficient labour without paying for it is the ever-recurring problem, especially as all work has to be done with the poorest implements and appliances, and there is neither money nor energy to remedy even the most time-destroying inconveniences. The wife is usually a willing slave up to and even beyond the limit of her strength, and sometimes the children also are zealous, but very rarely. I found a farmer's only son, aged six, in

sole charge of three cows, which he was to drive slowly along the lanes, allowing them to feed as they went. "Will they do what you tell them?" I asked. "They've got to!" he replied sturdily. Two years later I often saw him spend the whole summer evening riding the horse that worked some primitive machinery. At nine years old he rose as early as his father, and all the time before and after and between school hours was spent in work. He is eleven now; there are few things that he cannot do, but I doubt if he will do any of them much longer. But as a rule the boys protect themselves only too well. Another small landowner close by has six sons. The first and second were not especially averse to farming, but neither were they particularly useful at home, and the father hastened to place one as a labourer on a large farm and allowed the other to find a situation for himself in some stables. The third son detested the ceaseless drudgery, and ultimately ran away and disappeared. The fourth was permitted to take a situation at a shop in the nearest town, or he would probably have done the same. "Can you manage without him?" I asked the mother. "Well, it don't hardly seem as if we can, but Jim'll soon be able to leave school, and I've been a bit stronger myself lately; and then boys is never much good when there's creatures to be fed." Nearly

eighteen months later I was surprised to find Jim still at school, and thought I had somehow lost count of his age. "No," said his mother, "he's fourteen, goin' on fifteen, but his father says he'd sooner have him at school than what he'd be bothered with him about the place. He's give him black arms and black legs more than once, but he couldn't get a bit o' work out of him. He says he'll have to make out as best he can till Jack's fit to help him." It will be some time before Jack can cross his father's hopes ; at present he is not quite three, and divides his energies very fairly between slapping the only girl and dropping miscellaneous articles into the pig's trough. The arch opponents of the man who wishes for a small holding will always be those of his own household.

I have no statistics on the subject, but after nearly nine years' observation of families on holdings ranging from five to two hundred acres, I doubt whether there is any class where hard drinkers and gamblers are as numerous among husbands, where so many wives die prematurely or linger in a state of health which makes life a daily burden, where so many of the daughters are misshapen and deformed by hard work undertaken at too early an age, or where the sons so frequently fall into wasteful and vicious habits.

It is almost impossible for the small farmer's wife

to obtain help with her house and dairy work or with her pigs and poultry. Even if she is willing to pay thirty or forty per cent. higher wages than the surrounding gentry and shopkeepers, her house is boycotted by all respectable parents on account of the casual and low-class labour employed by her husband, unmarried men "off the roads," taking their meals in the kitchen and sleeping in sheds; while for her children's sake she is often forced to refuse the women and girls whose rough and careless assistance is at her disposal.

I recently read a statement that "one million families could be supported on the waste land of England." No one doubts that they could be supported on the desert of Sahara by the involuntary subscriptions of the rest of the world, but could they support themselves? Although the construction of the sentence is a trifle ambiguous, the writer doubtless meant to express his belief that they could, but it is difficult to say on what the belief is founded. Has there been an enormous rise in the value of agricultural produce, or immense improvements in methods capable of being applied on a small scale by women and children and partly trained men, or have a million men with a genius for farming, and provided with families of the right size, age, and disposition, been suddenly created?

To the ignorant, and apparently to many en-

thusiastic persons who cannot—and certainly do not wish to—plead ignorance, one piece of land is of the same value as another. Earth, with a little political aid, is as homogeneous and as divisible as metal. A hundred-acre farm can be turned by mere measurement into five, ten, or even fifty excellent holdings. In face of me, as I write, is a twenty-acre meadow surrounded by high hedges, adorned by five mighty elms, and covered with the richest-looking grass. To the inexperienced eye it is as good as it is beautiful, but the farmer who leases it “in with the rest” of his two hundred odd acres tells me: “It is so damp that half the year it is of no manner of use to me. Cows can stand a good bit of wet, but not *that*.” In an exceptionally dry year, this quality of the ground might even be of advantage; but suppose that meadow, or a portion of it, were the sole support of a family? Three years ago, an ambitious young man, steady, industrious, recently married, unwittingly hired a small farm composed of such land. Three months ago he was “sold up,” and left it accompanied by his wife, two babies, and a handful of clothing. He had lost everything else, including what to the ordinary man of twenty-eight is his most valuable asset—his health. As long as he lives rheumatic fever will play cat and mouse with him.

And what of the hardy breed of sons and daughters? Both parents are usually overworked, but especially the mother, and poor as the produce of the farm may be, it is the poorest part that falls to the share of the producers. Except in the case of illness, nothing of marketable value must be used. In the majority of cases, it would be found that the children have less butter, milk, and eggs than the children of the man earning about a guinea a week; and if they have more meat, it is meat of a quality that it would be difficult and even dangerous to sell. The housing, especially with regard to bedrooms, is often exceedingly bad, and the ignorance of all matters connected with the preservation of health is far denser than among ordinary sociable workmen and their wives. Given these facts, what results can be expected?

X

THE SPENDING OF THE SUPERFLUOUS

THE existence of the superfluous, of more than is necessary for the continuance of life and health and activity, may be attributed to society as a whole; the proportion of the superfluous that falls to any large class depends upon the general abilities of that class; but the expenditure of the superfluous is to a great extent a matter of individual choice, and supplies a key, not only as to moral character, but as to intellect. One's first observation is, however, that the amount of the superfluous is estimated very differently by the majority of the workers receiving it and by more cultivated onlookers.

The number of superfluities that can be bought on a family income of a pound a week is simply amazing to witness, but this is partly because necessities, from certain points of view, are so narrowly limited. Even in homes where there is double or treble that sum coming in weekly, it is

by no means unusual to find that one cheap comb, with half its teeth missing, serves for six or seven people without the help of a single hairbrush ; one broom, unaided by a dustpan, sweeps wood, stone, or matting, as the case may be ; the same tin or earthenware basin is used to wash the dinner things, to bath the baby, to make a pudding, to mix starch, or is brought to the district nurse to use for her patient. In the poorest houses, however, there are almost invariably photographs, vases, and ornaments in abundance, besides a considerable number of articles designed for use, but considered too good for the purpose, and ranging in size from a sofa to a drinking cup or a pincushion.

I doubt if any real conversation between members of two classes is possible. All my conversations with my patients and their friends have been of an exceedingly one-sided character ; that is to say, in some cases I talked, and in some they did, but we never took anything like equal parts. A question, a shade of surprise, the faintest dissent from their views, the lack of instant approbation, would generally be enough to silence them, and in many instances cause them to veer round suddenly, and bring forward opinions in direct opposition to those they had already expressed. Anxiety for their health always made me extremely

anxious to introduce any labour-saving appliances within their means, and I spent a considerable part of my time in eulogising the inventor of oilcloth. As a substitute for carpet one may call it execrable, but as an impermeable covering for boards, to prevent the necessity of scrubbing them, it is excellent, and my advice to my patients always was: "Go without everything but food until you have covered your kitchen and passage with oilcloth and a few mats. Never scrub if you can help it, and, when it cannot be avoided, use very little water and let that water be hot and clean." But this was never a popular method of laying out the superfluous: they preferred scrubbing, and then spending indefinite sums at the chemist's on embrocation for rheumatism or ointment for a bad knee.

It often seems to me that the smaller the income the larger the proportion of it that is spent in drugs. "A bottle of stuff from the chemist's" ranks higher than anything direct from a doctor, probably because more money has to be paid for it. People who declare that it is useless to expect the poor to spend three-halfpence on a tooth brush have little conception of the number of sixpenny and even shilling bottles of "toothache mixture" that are bought and paid for in even the poorest districts,

In all classes of life people can rise to meet a fresh responsibility. A few years ago a dentist in an unfashionable quarter told me : "We have been so busy we have not known which way to turn, owing to these new post-office regulations refusing to employ girls with neglected teeth. Whenever I got a chance, I was always on at their parents for the shameful way they let their children's teeth decay, when with a little attention they might keep a very decent and useful set ; but they preferred spending their money on things no more necessary for them than they are to the man in the moon. But it is all changed now ; they know which side their bread is buttered."

The desire for powerful medicines, and more particularly for those bitter in taste or effervescent, is especially strong among the aged poor. Half the complaints of many of the workhouse inmates, when they come out to see their friends, are of the obstinacy of the doctor and nurses in not allowing them to have what they demand in that line.

"Doctor say it would kill I to have 'un," grumbled one old man, and he would not rest until he had circumvented this mean and grudging dispenser of medical comforts by spending his few pence at a more obliging chemist's, and the prescription was swallowed without the prophesied

result. He told me, however, that he had once followed a doctor's advice, and thought that he owed the last forty years of his life to his good sense in doing so : "I worked underground for seven years, and then the doctor said if I did stay any longer I would want a wooden dress, so I did come up and go back to farm work."

The usual price for a herbalist's prescription seems to be half a crown, and to communicate it to a neighbour—possibly suffering from a totally unrelated disease—is a favourite form of charity ; it may also be an act of friendship. This is one of several recipes given to me by an aged cobbler : "For weak eyes : buy a pennyworth of white copperas and two ounces of sugar. Throw half of the copperas away and boil the remainder with the sugar in a pint of water until it is reduced to half a pint. To be applied twice a day." I dared not ask whether it was impossible either to buy a halfpennyworth of copperas or to use a quart of water, but the importance of "throwing away half" was specially impressed on me.

Foreigners look upon the love of strong drugs as a peculiarly English trait, and believe it to be coupled with innate power to resist their effects. A Swiss chemist told me that he often made up prescriptions for Englishmen that he would be afraid to give to continentals. In fact, "An

Englishman's dose" is their equivalent expression for our "Enough to kill a horse."

As a child I remember hearing the doctor of a great convict prison, who was much troubled by malingeringers, describe how he had tried to clear them out of the hospital by the size and nauseousness and frequency of the doses of medicine; but the more he did this, the more the men crowded in. He reversed the system, and made the portions small and few and tasteless, and the infirmary lost all attraction except for those really ill. It gave a pitiful idea of the appalling dulness of a convict's life, and the recollection has made me understand why the poorer and more uneducated my patients are, and the more monotonous their outward and inward life, the more readily they spend money on quack medicines. I seldom find them popular among those who are eager newspaper readers, or in any way display voluntary activity of mind or body. Dulness and apathy probably cause as many follies and as much waste of time and money as excessive love of pleasure and excitement. To detect malingeringers, by the way, used to be considered the main part of the duties of naval and military surgeons in times of peace. Even twenty years ago this conception was still in full force, and I well remember the unpleasant sidelight thrown upon the matter by a Scotch inspector-general who

protested indignantly, "The puir fellows, how many are driven to their death! Whenever a man's too ignorant to know what's the matter with them, and too lazy to find out, he says they're shamming, and he can always find commanding officers ready to believe him."

Among all classes of wage-earners the superior type of parents are most anxious to spend part of the superfluous upon the higher education of their children; but they are often pathetically ignorant as to what branches of learning it will be best for them to devote their time to, and still more vague as to the degree of proficiency in any art or science which enables man or woman to earn a decent living by it. They are also lamentably in want of exact information as to the expense which must be incurred, directly and indirectly, before satisfactory results can be expected. It is pitiable to see fond fathers and mothers spending money they can ill afford to pay for lessons in music or painting for boys and girls who have not a grain of musical or artistic ability beyond what is common to the normal human being, encouraging and even compelling them to "practise," and "get on with their drawing" for many hours a day, doing all the house work, lest they should spoil their hands, and totally unable to see, until it is too late, that instead of giving their children a good trade, they

are preparing for them a future of bitter disappointment, harassing anxiety, and semi-starvation.

Popular opinion throws the blame of these deceptive dreams and fatal miscalculations entirely upon the young people themselves and their supposed aversion to physical labour, but more often than not they were originated by their parents, and persisted in with blind infatuation and in spite of the children's frequent rebellion against the almost unbearable drudgery and privation, and their occasional gleams of common-sense and their half-understanding of the uselessness and injuriousness of the plans laid out for their social advancement. I knew one young lad with far more gift for music than is usual among these victims of mistaken parental ambition who saved himself for a better fate by declaring firmly, "I am not a genius, and I do not wish to live and die as a twentieth-rate bandsman"; but such clear-sightedness, accompanied by the necessary tenacity, is rare at any age.

Even if the parents' choice is a good and reasonable one in itself, their ignorance on the third point—the inevitable cost in money and in time—frequently causes not merely disappointment to themselves but utterly disastrous results to their children. This is especially the case with very

poor parents who allow clever boys or girls to become pupil teachers without in the least realising how long it will be before they can earn their entire livelihood, and the quality and amount of food which is indispensable in order that young people may safely bear the threefold strain of growing, learning, and teaching.

"If I'd known what it would mean," said the intelligent wife of a labourer, "Katie should ha' gone to service same as her sister done. Her health has broke down, and I've had her a whole year doing nothing at all ; now she's going up for the examination again, but I'm afraid there isn't much chance for her, and it'll just be the same old tale over again. The doctor says that if she is to study like that, we ought to give her plenty of fish and mutton and all sorts of things, but how can we ? I only wish it had never been begun. One thing, I haven't let her grow up like many teachers does. She knows how to turn her hand to everything in a house just as well as her sister does. But there ! If she hasn't the strength left to do it, it don't make much odds what she knows or what she don't know."

I knew a vigorous, energetic, ambitious widow left "with a trade" and three children, and she determined that they should all become school teachers, "cost what it may." The daughter has

almost died from anaemia caused by mental and physical strain on poor food, one of the sons is at present in an asylum, and the other is extremely likely to follow him. In another family where the parents are sober, steady-going, perfectly normal people, and the father earning a good living at an outdoor occupation, one son devoted to "art" has already paid two visits to an asylum and is again showing symptoms of the most hopeless form of mental disease, one is earning a miserable pittance, and the only daughter is almost entirely incapacitated by anaemia.

These victims to the ignorant, well-intentioned, self-sacrificing spending of the superfluous are simply innumerable, and it is the more deeply to be regretted because the parents are usually estimable people, and the children, though not geniuses, are above the average in intellect and —until the reckless and unnecessary strain comes —are also above it in physical strength.

Parents as a whole are certainly more anxious about the education of their children than they used to be, and the State concerns itself with the matter more closely every year; but when listening to the life stories of prosperous workmen and successful house-mothers of sixty, seventy, eighty, and more years of age, one sometimes wonders if the young people themselves are as eager about

self-culture in any form as many of them undoubtedly were in former days. A clever old countryman, employed by rich and poor alike when work of any skill and nicety has to be done, said to me recently, "When I were young, if I did want to learn anything I gived a coat. Now you do have to give a coat to get anyone to learn anything. I do keep saying to my grandson, Keep your eyes open, learn everything you can. What would become of me if I knowed nothing but hard work, now my strength be three parts gone? But I don't know where their wits is *to*. By six o'clock of a summer afternoon they look to be a mile away from their work with a clean collar round their necks. Ah, everyone be wantin' I. They do snap I up. I give a day here and a day there just for to content them." But until old age and impaired strength come, there is much to be said against having more than one trade; for it often results in men's having to work hard at both, and earning less than if they had only one. "I know as much about gardening as anyone else, but I take good care not to," I was told by a country groom. "I get 23s. a week as a groom, and a groom-gardener is lucky if he gets a guinea. Plenty of them get 17s. and a little green stuff."

In many families a considerable proportion of the superfluous is spent on furniture which in no way

adds to the immediate comfort of the possessors ; but as this form of outlay is almost invariably a sign that they are on the upward grade, the purchases are by no means to be scorned. It may be sad to find that the best room in the house is only an air-tight storing-place for the accumulated treasure, that the fixed bath is used as a soiled-linen basket, and that the jugs in the handsome toilet sets are filled with paper instead of water, while the proud owners still go downstairs unwashed and perform their unwilling ablutions at the sink a couple of hours later. Nevertheless, the habit of working and saving to obtain these things has been formed ; they add greatly to self-respect, and the next generation, or even the younger members of the existing one, will acquire the habit of using them. It is true that there are instances where this desire for fine furniture is so premature as to be sheer folly. A few weeks ago, for example, a woman living in a wretched cottage with a leaking roof and not a single dry wall offered to give £10 ready money for a second-hand piano for which she had no more direct use than was implied by the vaguely expressed intention of " letting her little girl begin music." It might be said in her defence that the cottage was not her own, and that any money laid out on it might have been lost ; but she could have had a far better house fifty yards away

for the same rent if she would have engaged it by the quarter instead of the week ; and a person who could afford to spend nearly a year's rent on an article that she did not need would surely have been justified in risking the loss that might be entailed by such an unlikely combination of events as that her steady-going husband should be suddenly dismissed from his employment, and be unable to find any other berth within cycling distance. Also there were house-owners in the same hamlet who spent the superfluous chiefly on fine clothes (men and women alike), while their roofs and walls were in very little better condition than hers.

Comfort is rarely studied, but is it only among the poor, and only in private life, that appearance ranks before reality ? A few years ago the captain of the largest passenger ship then in existence told me : "The company have just spent £10,000 in re-decorating the first-class passengers' quarters, and, for all the passengers care, they might just as well have spent a couple of hundred on a fresh coat of paint. 'But, can you believe it ? I had the greatest difficulty in the world in inducing them to buy an afternoon tea-set for the ladies' saloon. Tea was served in cups as large as basins and as thick as jam-pots—enough to disgust a schoolboy. At last I said I should have to buy one at my own expense and put it in the steward's charge ; and then

they gave in and sent a very decent one. I dare-say it came to fourpence a piece, but at anyrate women could get it between their teeth without dislocating their jaws."

As a general rule, a surprisingly small proportion of the surplus is spent on more abundant or more delicate food. When people have once risen beyond the point of wasting the margin on drink or remaining idle rather than earn a margin, their desires are for better clothes, more amusement, better furniture, and better prospects for their children. The demand for better housing comes very late, and if circumstances make it easy for the less advanced to obtain good quarters, they and their children profit little by them. In five and seven roomed houses supplied with every convenience and occupied by a single family I have sometimes found an appalling amount of dirt and a simply poisonous atmosphere. Those who can keep two rooms in good order can generally rise to three, and those who have managed four or five for a considerable time may rise to seven ; ordinary human nature changes gradually, and not by leaps and bounds.

The only way of learning to spend the superfluous wisely is to possess it and have the control of it ; but the lessons of experience will be far more quickly laid to heart if aided by principles that can to some

extent be taught at school; and the advantage of having such a mixed population that there are suitable examples close at hand cannot easily be overrated. We are often told that an ounce of practice is worth a pound of theory, but in my daily rounds I see tons of experience utterly wasted for lack of any principles by which it can be co-ordinated. And, above all, one must dismiss the idea that thrift is mere abstinence. As an old sailor told me very truly, "Any dam' fool can save. The difficulty lies in spending."

XI

WHY THE POOR PREFER TOWN LIFE

THE fundamental reason why the countryman forsakes the village for the town is because, as a sentient being, he naturally seeks surroundings which he believes will reduce his pains and increase his satisfactions.

The reason why he believes that this more favourable environment will be found in a great city may in some cases be because he is by nature unsuited to outdoor work, or to work that must to a large extent be done without the stimulus of constant companionship, but it is usually because he has not the right education either to enable him to enjoy the pleasures and interests that the country affords, or to reduce its undeniable hardships, deprivations, and discomforts to a bearable point.

Very many of those anxious to maintain, or create, or reinstate,—whichever word they may chance to use,—a large rural population, do not

in the least know what rural life meant to the poor of the previous three generations, nor have they any practical knowledge of what it means to them at the present moment. For their ideas of the past they seem to be chiefly indebted to novelists—not contemporary novelists, but mere romancists—and their conception of living reality seems to be founded partly upon hasty reading of hastily formed generalisations and partly upon imagination of an unsympathetic and totally untrained description.

Delightful pictures are drawn in modern novels of the old-fashioned farm and its peace and plenty, and the exquisite cleanliness and unbroken health and prosperity of the inmates. We may perhaps catch a fleeting glimpse of the labourers at the lower end of the table, but they are always lads, or else crusty and trusty old bachelors. Where the parents of these young people may be, how they themselves must live if they get married, does not seem to concern the writers or the readers, and yet by how many the labourers outnumbered the farmers, and how wretched their average condition was! At the present day they are decidedly better off, but does the life of a country labourer, the total return that he gets for his work, bear a fair comparison, from his point of view and counting only the advantages

that he can appreciate, with the total return received by town labourers who are, roughly speaking, his equals mentally, morally, and physically?

Here are three out of many similar cases which have come under my notice during the current year. A middle-aged man appealed to me one night for help to bury his youngest child, aged four, who had died after a brief illness. It was only the funeral expenses, he said, that he was unable to meet, and he was anxious that the interment should take place as soon as possible, as he had another child of seven seriously ill.

"I thank my God," he added, "that as long as she lived she had everything she wanted, both from me and her mother. I don't doubt she's gone to a better place, but I do take it hard to lose her, for she always stuck to me. The moment I was back from my work, there she was, and there wasn't a word you could say to her that she didn't understand. She was most wonderful sharp. The last three nights I never had my clothes off." I knew nothing of the man's circumstances, but I was impressed by his sincerity, and finding that his master, a working farmer, and several villagers of still narrower means had subscribed, I did the same, postponing any inquiries into his statements until after the funeral.

I found that he had five children entirely dependent on him, and that his wife was in very poor health. He was a steady and regular worker, acquainted with the whole round of farm labour. His wages were 13s. a week, a garden that he had not sufficient time at his disposal to make full use of, and a four-roomed cottage in exceedingly bad repair and in such an isolated position that his wife received very little of the neighbourly help of which she was in so much need. Drinking water had to be carried nearly half a mile, and the nearest shop was five times that distance away. The walls and floor of the house were damp, and a man trying to describe the state of the roof said to me, "You could put a wheel-barrel through it," but even this scarcely gives an adequate idea of its condition. I doubt if there was a square yard where a man could not have thrust his fist through it from inside or out. The kitchen had a stone floor, and as damp stone rots all the cheaper kinds of floor covering, it was almost bare; the door opened straight into this living-room and was immediately opposite the fireplace, but in this place the children had to be nursed, because there was no means of lighting a fire anywhere else. The little girl had never been ill before, and in all probability had not succumbed so much to the disease as to the conditions under

which she was nursed, added to the lack of timely advice as to the best practicable method of counteracting the influence of these conditions. There was no nurse in the district, the parish doctor had been sent for rather late, and being much occupied, had not obeyed the summons until the afternoon of the following day.

In what circumstances would a town labourer of equal steadiness and intelligence have been living ? His wages would not have been under 23s. throughout the year, and he would have worked on an average two hours a day less to earn that amount. The rent and taxes of a small house, not as far distant from his work as the agricultural labourer's often is from his, would be 5s. a week, or a little less. This dwelling, unlike the cottage, would be wind and water tight, and would have drainage, unlimited water-supply, and regular removal of refuse matter ; all the floors would be boarded, all the ceilings lath and plastered, and three rooms out of the four or five would have chimneys. The children would be close to their school, a serious consideration during the first few years of their attendance, and the wife would be near the shops instead of painfully carrying her heavy purchases for a couple of miles through heat, cold, rain, or darkness. The advantages of various provident and insurance societies would be much more pressed

upon the husband, and he would belong to one or more ; there would always be neighbours at hand to help his wife or keep an eye on the children, and trained nurses to rely on in times of special stress.

In the second instance, the youngest of eight children (six still at home) contracted pneumonia, and she also had to be nursed in the stone-floored kitchen which opened immediately on to the garden and was the only possible means of exit and entrance for the whole family. Not only this, but keeping up a fire at night made one of the two bedrooms uninhabitable, owing to the choking clouds of smoke which reached it through some defect in chimney and partition wall. The five children had to take possession of the front room, and both parents slept in the kitchen with the invalid. The child was strong and healthy and the mother devoted, and it was not until the eighth day that she died. Under the ordinary housing conditions of a town, and with a doctor who would have attended such a critical case six or eight times instead of twice, and with a nurse to give authoritative and detailed advice, I firmly believe that the child's life could have been saved. She also was specially dear to her father.

The eldest of the family told me : " The last night mother was so worn out that we made her go to bed with the children, and father and I sat up

together. At six o'clock I made him some toast for his breakfast, and Kitty brightened up and asked him for a piece of it, and he buttered a little strip for her. She only just put her lips to it and gave it back to him, but he went off to work quite cheerful, thinking she was better. He can hardly have been gone twenty minutes when she died." Had either of these men much reason to love the country?

The villager who had tried to describe the roof of the first man's cottage was ill himself a little later on, and lay week after week in an oppressively low room with one small window from which he could see nothing. "Has the vicar been to visit you?" I asked one day when conversation flagged. "Not he! I 'xpect he's afraid to come and see such a black sheep." "A sheep? Perhaps he takes you for a fierce old wolf with that red nightcap on." "Well," with a pious drawl heavily discounted by a sarcastic grin, "we all knows that our vile bodies isn't of no account, but there's our *souls* to be thought of."

In the third instance, a man and his wife—both about eighty years of age, frugal people who had saved a small independence—were living in a cottage at half a crown a week with one room and an outhouse downstairs and two bedrooms on the upper floor. There was no drainage and no water-supply. As a personal favour, they

were allowed to fetch half a bucket of drinking water from a house a hundred yards away (the nearest spring being fully eight times that distance), and for the rest they depended upon a single rain-water barrel. A neighbour had offered to give them a second one, but the guttering on three sides of the house was so riddled with holes that they could not have filled it except with an amount of labour of which they were no longer capable. In the early part of the winter the old man was attacked by mortal illness, and for three months of bitter weather he lingered in a fireless bedroom, measuring about eight feet by seven, and decidedly less than seven feet in height. He was a remarkably tall man, and in his best days can have found little to spare between his head and the ceiling. For some years after the old people rented the house there had been a chimney to this room, but it had fallen down piecemeal. The landlord did not choose to replace it, and they could neither compel him to do so nor afford to do it themselves; and cottages were so scarce that newly married couples often had to lodge in a single room for a year or more while awaiting a vacancy. They had no children left, and during the last six weeks a relative from a distance came to help with the nursing. She was a most worthy young woman,

and endured the discomforts courageously, but she spent most of her leisure moments in explaining to the villagers that if her old uncle had chosen to "live up" in a large town he would have had a good bedroom with a fireplace and a sash window. It happened to be a village where the inhabitants err on the side of easy contentment and passive endurance and have a great fear of town life, but her protests made a considerable impression upon them.

Exaggerated ideas of the horrors of town life are often met with in the country. I have sometimes been distressed to find the poorest and most ill-housed cottagers giving their pence and their pity on the strength of appeals which come dangerously near being false pretences. Curiously enough, this belief in the extreme misery of towns may co-exist with a great desire to visit them. "How I should like to take my Emma to Manchester," said a woman living on the outskirts of a small town. I asked why; for as Emma was only six, and very comfortable where she was, I could not imagine for what good purpose she was to be taken there. "Oh, I *should* just like her to see all the miserable children running about with no shoes and stockings, looking for a crust of bread, and with hardly a rag to cover them!"

The objections I find most commonly brought forward by villagers against a country life are the great length of working hours in summer and the need for men and boys to supplement their wages by further work in their own gardens and allotments, coupled with the great difficulty of making any use of the comparative leisure of the winter months. There is a general prejudice against women doing any vegetable gardening, even when they have no young children and much time on their hands. There are special complaints of the weariness of attending upon animals, and very little liking for them or understanding of their ways, and the great increase of dairy farming entails heavy Sunday labour. Butter need not be made every day, but with regard to cheese there is no respite. The loneliness of the life is found less bearable now that children have become so dependent upon the excitement of school life, and the lack of constant companionship during working hours is considered a trial; townsmen are great talkers, and countrymen wish to be. There is generally, though by no means invariably, an absence of all intellectual interest in country work, of all æsthetic appreciation of the beauty of natural surroundings, of all manly determination to wring from the life the best that it affords. The more

active-minded men are depressed by the scarcity of books and the want of opportunities of self-improvement on the only lines on which they can conceive the existence of culture ; and ambitious parents declare with much truth, "There's no advantages for the children here. Willy was in the sixth standard when he was eleven, and there he is still. Mabel cycles over to G——; there's a 'centre' there, but it do take it out of her, seven miles and uphill pretty near all the way. My sister's boys have been at an upper-grade school for the last two years, and I'm sure they're not a bit sharper than what Willy is. And then what openings will there be for them ? There's nothing to be had for boys, nor girls neither, without sending them right away from home." To satisfy these natural ambitions, and to prevent the premature break-up of family life, many parents give up their employment in the country and seek work in the nearest town, while very many more hover miserably upon the edge of such a momentous decision.

There is a widespread prejudice that all clever and active people desert the rural districts, and that only aged persons and idiots remain—especially idiots. The frequent accusation of stupidity brought against villagers reminds me of a lady who tried to pass herself off at a

health resort as an invalid. After watching her for a few minutes, a shrewd old north-country-woman exclaimed, "Eh, but Ah'd laike to see the well ones where you coom fro'!" If those left in the country are the stupid ones, I can only wonder that towns do not more richly abound in genius. And in what a meek, matter-of-course fashion villagers accept this imputation —no idea of its injustice seems to cross their minds. I shall never forget the naïve gratification shown by a class of Sunday-school girls, ranging in age from fourteen upwards, when I told them that the Bible had to a great extent been written by persons who, like themselves, had grown up in the country, and that therefore very many of the illustrations and metaphors used were perfectly plain and open to them, but often needed elaborate explanation before they could be comprehended by their town-bred cousins.

Many of the cleverest inhabitants have remained behind—that is to say, those who have received, or have given themselves, the education which enables them to acquire possession of the best houses and the best gardens, and to constantly improve and add to them.

Is it possible to find out in what way these persons were trained to make the most of country

life, to conquer its difficulties and profit by its advantages? If so, we might at last be on the road towards a right system of rural education.

Personally, I cannot believe that the solution of the problem "how to stem the rural exodus" is to be found in small farming, which means poverty and idleness for many of the holders, poverty and ceaseless drudgery for most, and a varying amount of what in towns we should brand with the name of "casual employment" for the landless men, who must inevitably sink far below the position of labourers on farms large enough to supply work all the year round.

Many persons who clearly perceive that a small holding will not supply a decent living for a family of the ordinary size and the average abilities, nevertheless cherish the belief that men in possession of a small parcel of land could easily supplement their income by working part of their time for wages, and thus be freed from the fitful cruelty of Nature on the one hand and the fluctuations of the labour market on the other. They ignore the fact, patent to all practical people, that any man who carries on two trades ends by receiving less than if he confined himself to one.

The solution might rather be arrived at by the gradual re-organisation of country life in such a manner that it would be possible for the men to

have more leisure, and more varied means of utilising and enjoying it, and for their families to have more domestic comfort.

"I'm never free," sighs the industrious countryman, while his lazy brother instinctively takes care of himself by remaining idle for weeks at a time, living on his garden and the general family resources if he is a householder, and very often "simplifying life" by being a lodger or sleeping in a barn when he chooses to work, and going into the Union for a few months if he wearies of it, or finds the weather too unpropitious, or his employers too exacting in the matter of punctuality and sobriety, or his clothes becoming indecently shabby.

The boundless belief in country innocence, country morality, country vigour of body and independence of mind, is simply inexplicable. One week's experience of an ordinary village would surely be enough to expose the fallacy. I have known men and women and children living in isolated cottages set in some of the loveliest places in England whose sordid misery and crawling viciousness could not be paralleled in the lowest parts of an old seaport town; and there are many so-called "slums" which a respectable woman might pass through freely for years without meeting with the gross insults that

are often experienced in idyllic villages. When I hear objections raised to Fresh Air Funds, on the ground that town children corrupt the rustics, I am at a loss to know what depths of grossness or wickedness can be known to them which have not long since been revealed to every village schoolboy. Possibly much of what is now mere prejudice may be traced to the revelations of early nineteenth-century blue books. They were appalling enough, in all conscience, but perhaps even with regard to old-time factory work our eyes are too exclusively turned upon its evil side. Physically it may be difficult to exaggerate the lasting wrong done by overcrowding and unlimited hours of work, but on the mental and spiritual side there may have been more gain than we can well estimate. Take the first intelligent artisan you meet, and try to realise that his great-grandfather was a pauper labourer starved-out in the country and emigrated into the town at the guardians' expense, thankful to work a certain twelve hours a day for an uncertain thirteen shillings a week. Does he owe most to town or country? We think only of the "evil communications" facilitated by the close daily contact, but a strongly religious woman over eighty years of age told me towards the close of the last century that all the moral and religious teaching she received in early life came

from a lad who toiled side by side with her in a factory. At first she had simply scoffed at him, but was finally won by the patience and courage with which he fought against the physical suffering that ended his life before manhood had well begun.

With all history before us, it is high time that we recognised that neither town nor country influences working alone can produce a type of manhood that, for the honour of human nature, we should care to regard as stable.

XII

THE ART OF REPAIRING

THE poor are seldom taught the art of repairing in its many bearings upon their daily life. Even as a preparation for the millennium, when everyone will be well housed, are they encouraged to make the best of the accommodation at present within their reach? The facts seem to be lost sight of that no one on earth has a perfect house, and no one has a dwelling so bad that, with care and attention, it could not be made less injurious to health and less subversive of comfort. Just as in the religious sphere there are those who seem to think that death instantly fits any man for heavenly occupations and heavenly associates, so in the philanthropic there are many who seem to believe that you have merely to provide good houses at someone else's expense, and everyone will forthwith live, and continue to live, under healthy conditions. With all their failings, most municipal authorities are a little wiser than that: when they receive an

application from a would-be tenant, they send an inspector to see what he makes of the home he has already. I have heard serious complaints that owing to this the only persons benefited are those who are so respectable that they could easily have found suitable houses for themselves; but when this plan is adhered to, everyone gets a step up, and a step at a time is as much as most of us can manage. Another fact is frequently forgotten by those in haste to clear out every court and alley and tenement. The outer fringe of wage-earners are not yet sufficiently civilised to be able to live in self-contained houses. No words can express the pity that I have often felt for the weak members of a family—and sometimes the weak member is the husband—living in an isolated cottage or a house completely shut off from all compulsory intercourse with the neighbouring ones. In crowded courts everyone knows everyone else's business, and to a certain extent interferes with the way they carry it out. The morals of an excited mob may be worse than the morals of any one person in it, but in the usual state of affairs public opinion in the worst street is not only more enlightened than the opinion of the worst dwellers in it, but holds itself above that of the average inhabitant when he or she has a "bad day." The men who happen to be sober restrain the men who happen

to be drunk. The women, though perhaps nearly all of them display occasional harshness to their children, and some of them show culpable neglect or practise gross favouritism, can see these ugly faults in others ; and the frightened or hungry child knows where to find food or shelter—and perhaps the very next week is offering her own mother's protection to her small friends in distress.

Once a tenant in these favoured Buildings, however, and direct discouragement is given to the art of repair. Persons formerly well acquainted with the use of paint, whitewash, and the paste brush, when dealing with a large landlord or a municipality soon learn to insist on having their ceilings whitened and their walls papered exactly at the intervals laid down in the bond, although these intervals are not regulated by the habits of careful persons who protect the wall at the back of the sink or behind the frying-pan, who mend the wall-paper if it gets torn, and prevent the lamp from smoking, but are founded upon the requirements of the careless and indifferent housekeeper. Tenants often make demands for what they do not in the least need, convinced that "you don't have to pay nothing for having it done," and few people even attempt to make them understand that if all the inhabitants of the Blocks were careful and reasonable in these respects, rents would be con-

siderably lower. To penalise the specially careless tenants is not always practicable owing to the generosity of feeling often shown among the poor. For example, I knew a family who had had their ceilings injured and their rooms flooded twice by their overhead neighbours leaving a child of three to amuse herself with the taps while they enjoyed their Sunday afternoon nap ; and far from taking any action against them, they did their best to hide the damage that had been done. A third time the same thing happened ; the head of the downstair family was ill, and the wife was so much annoyed when his difficult sleep was disturbed by a heavy splash of water on his face that, although she made no open complaint, she was less sedulous in concealing the injury done to her rooms, and the reckless neighbours received a week's notice.

In most villages there is a lack of sufficient accommodation, and this is true even of places where the population is as much as five and twenty per cent. below the highest point it is known to have reached. We are told that this is because the countryman "cannot afford an economic rent." When I observe the character of his work, I recognise that he receives its full value ; but when I consider how he is housed and fed and clothed, and the hours that he is expected to spend at work, I can only marvel that the value of his labour is not even less.

While we are settling the knotty question of how he can be educated up to the point of earning enough money to pay an economic rent, instead of forcing someone else to pay it for him, or by some jugglery trying to make it appear that no one at all is bearing the burden of his present incapacity, or of running up tintack and pasteboard cottages vying one against the other in cheapness and chilliness, why not repair and improve the houses already in existence and being wastefully permitted to fall into ruins ? In villages where the inhabitants are either disgracefully overcrowded or are alternately shivering and gasping in the new Tin Teakettle Row (the favourite popular name), there are substantially built thick-walled old cottages needing little but larger windows, the addition of a bedroom, and the thorough repair of the roof to turn them into healthier and more comfortable dwellings than the greater part of these fantastic brick boxes. I know one middle-aged couple able to afford a rent of 4s. who left an old cottage for a new one, attracted by the decency of having a third bedroom, the possibility of lighting a fire upstairs in case of illness, and the obvious convenience of having a passage instead of being compelled to walk straight from the road into the one living-room. After three years' experience of it the wife told me : " As for the cold, I never felt anything

like it in all my life, and in the summer I simply dread to have to light a fire. The old cottages are far healthier in that kind of way, and I'd rather be back in one if only anyone would spend something on it, but they *won't*. Look at that cottage over there, six people living in it, and nothing under the thatch any more than if it were a cow shed, and the thatch sinking in on them and full of holes. We shiver and bake where we are, but at least the water doesn't come in from overhead."

Not only have the poor very little idea of the duty or possibility of preventing ill-health, but they know nothing of repairing it. In no way does their excessive passivity and endurance show itself more clearly than in their treatment of sick persons, especially of chronic cases. As a rule, they are exceedingly kind to the sufferers, patient, self-devoted to the last degree, but their whole attitude of mind is fatalistic. They do not seek to know the cause of the illness in order that they or others may learn any lesson from it, and they do not strive for the recovery to such a degree of health as is demonstrably within reach. As a consequence, many persons are completely bed-ridden and utterly helpless who need only have been partially crippled if more active and intelligent efforts had been made from the beginning, and others who might have been almost normal persons

are semi-invalids. They lack hope in these cases, and therefore lack the chief spring of successful endeavour.

Respectable wage-earners often note real or fancied defects in the system of elementary education, but do they make any serious attempts to repair these defects? Does the father who declares that his son in the seventh standard cannot write out the simplest bill for him correctly, either teach him how to do it or make his grievance heard in the right direction? Even the mother who tells me: "I don't want my children learnt jography 'n 'istry. I want 'em learnt to say, 'Thank you, ma'am,' and 'Yes, please, sir.' *That's* what'll get 'em on in the world," does she ever remember that the school hours scarcely amount to twenty-four in the course of seven days, and that as she is relieved of all the less important branches of instruction, she has ample time to instil good manners?

Even the art of repairing their clothes is by no means generally practised among the poor, and it certainly might be more carefully taught and inculcated at school than is at present the case. One rarely meets a child on some part of whose costume it might not be practised with advantage. Sewing should be taught to boys when they are too young to imagine that it is an indignity; later on, in the years when they have lost a mother's

care and not yet gained a wife's, they will only be too thankful for the knowledge. Sailors do a great deal to undermine the idea that rags are more manly than the use of a needle and cotton, but I was a little taken aback one day when I heard a wife ask her husband, "Have you sewn those two buttons on your brown waistcoat? That's right. I do hate to see an untidy man!" Two winters ago a fine young seaman came back to his native village for a fortnight's leave, and made a deep impression on all the lads in the place by cutting out and putting together a complete sailor suit for his youngest brother and what was called "a trowsis" for the next above him. Unfortunately for the continued education of his admirers, he was recalled to his ship before the second costume was finished. He even found one imitator, and although the results would not have passed muster at any inspection, the lad who wore the suit was kept warm and tidy as long as it lasted. Thousands of mothers and married sisters and aunts tell the school children who have been laboriously learning to "cut out" that it is cheaper to buy ready-made clothes. The time will undoubtedly come when fewer and fewer garments are made at home, or even made to order, but the necessity for mending will exist as long as matter has a tendency to change its form.

Still less is the art of repairing household furniture commonly practised by the poor. I never fully grasped how much of the squalor and discomfort that one sees among them is superficial and easily removable until on one occasion with an expenditure of 5s., nearly half of which went to pay for the labour of an intelligent child just above school age, I was able to turn a room not fit for any human being into a bright and pleasant one for a chronic invalid. Among other details, I recall that the chimney was cured of smoking, and a Hinckes-Bird ventilator was fixed in the window; the walls were colour-washed, and the pictures cleaned and re-hung; the floor was scrubbed and stained, and a torn and filthy carpet was washed, ripped, and re-bound in separate strips; the bed was disinfected and the stuffing of the mattress burnt and replaced by oat chaff, while a pennyworth of glue and the loan of a few tools turned some worthless lumber into serviceable chairs and tables, and a cupboard with shelves was contrived out of a few old orange boxes.

From the innumerable classes held to teach boys carpentering, carving, etc., great good would arise if they were taught these arts mainly with the laudable object of improving the comfort and beauty of their own homes, and not with a view to a semi-charitable sale at the end of the session,

which brings a few shillings to some and a wholly disproportionate sense of disappointment to others. It is pitiable to see a winter's work result in what a lad has been taught to call a panel or a medallion, but which his mother terms "a loose bit of wood." If carving is taught, it should be applied to some chair or table or stool that the lads already possess ; and if carpentry or joinery, it should be the complete manufacture of some article suited for their own homes. As to the fretwork on which so many neat-handed boys are encouraged to waste their time, I would gladly see every scrap in existence used for firewood.

If we could but once understand that the poor are remarkably like ourselves, we should have more faith in trying to inspire them with the spirit of self-help than in endeavouring to bear whichever of their burdens they seem specially inclined to let drop. (An old-established metaphor which reminds me of a patient who exclaimed, "Bear my burden ! That would be easy enough. It's the hundreds of parcels I complain of.") Are there any wage-earners, any bad husbands, wives, parents, or children, are there even any professional unemployed whose conduct we cannot parallel among ourselves and our acquaintances ? Once recognising this elementary fact, we shall not venture to treat them as if they were at once so much better and

so much worse, so much more foolish and yet stronger-headed than ourselves. We act as if they are mentally incapable of learning the lessons taught by hunger, privation, and family affection, and yet have no fear that they will learn improvidence, laziness, and indifference to duty if the State bestows its most favourable attention upon the unemployed, the neglected child, the deserted wife, the homeless tramp. Only too frequently we take the little that he hath from the man with a decent standard of life and bestow it upon him that hath none, with even more disastrous results than if we schemed to benefit the rich. As sweeping reforms cannot well be carried out every six months or so, we should be in a better position if the art of keeping all human institutions in moral and intellectual repair were more generally and seriously studied.

XIII

WASTED EFFORT AMONG THE POOR

BROUGHT into close acquaintance with the exhausting physical drudgery of life on the one hand, and its mental toil and stress on the other, the district nurse learns that there is a curse in labour as well as a blessing, and acquires an active hatred of all waste effort of mind or body.

All detailed attempts to economise physical exertion are of very modern origin. We have only to observe the houses and furniture designed for the upper classes within the last fifty or sixty years in order to realise that the cost of labour to the human being was less considered formerly than it is now.

No piece of legislation ever accomplished has cost as much labour to carry out as the various Elementary Education Acts. On the whole, the children of the poor have been very greatly benefited, but the results nevertheless bear but a small proportion to the efforts put forth, especially

to the heroic struggles of school teachers trying to carry out the regulations even when in direct opposition to all the laws of ordinary mental and physical development and to some of the most unalterable conditions of working-class lives. The teaching of the teachers and the choice of the instruction given and received by them have been left far too much in the hands of men, and too many of them are men themselves, especially considering that an enormously large proportion of their pupils will be girls and children under ten years of age.

In the upper classes it is generally acknowledged that the longer young boys remain in the hands of competent governesses the better position they win and maintain at school, and also that it is sheer waste of time for girls of less than sixteen or seventeen to be taught any subject whatever by a master.

All the more intelligent and open-minded elementary school teachers must in course of time accumulate valuable experience, and form some ideas as to the right order and succession as well as the method of placing the various branches of knowledge before the infant mind, but they are bound hard and fast by an intricate mesh of rules. A most zealous village schoolmistress, responsible for some sixty girls and boys, complained to me :

"I always have to teach with my eye on the clock. If I were to spend an extra ten minutes explaining a matter which for some reason not understood by grown-up minds is peculiarly difficult to children, and then cut ten minutes from some senseless routine that the stupidest child can follow when it is half asleep, it would be a most serious breach of the regulations. After twenty-five years' experience, no more discretion is allowed to me than if I were a pupil teacher, and I dare not take it."

I was always at a loss to understand how many years average Board-school children took to learn to read, how unintelligently they read, and how little interest they felt in the art; but one day I came across a book "specially prepared" to combat the fact that infants of a certain age were expected to meet and conquer any monosyllable in the language, and it incidentally threw a clear light upon the problem. I do not say that the book was ever licensed by the authorities, and I understand that its use has now been strictly forbidden, but daily drilling in long lists of totally unconnected words, such as plumb, jamb, apse, aisle, weight, flange, niche, reign, guile, ledge, must have been stupefying in the extreme.

Most of the many hours devoted to arithmetic before the age of ten are utterly wasted, and at no age is the instruction sufficiently practical. I have

known girls of thirteen or fourteen who could work long sums in vulgar fractions, but could not say, even when given ample time for reflection, how much a penny a week would amount to in a year, nor work any of the simple problems that a child of seven or eight, unable to write figures, ought to be able to solve mentally with ease and pleasure. In different parts of England I have asked boys and girls of from twelve to eighteen to use a pair of scales, and unless they had relatives engaged in retail trade they were totally unable to do it or to connect the pounds and ounces of school routine with the pieces of brass and iron in front of them. With a yard-measure or a foot-rule most of them are equally at a loss. Geography seems to be taught in much the same fashion. A girl of thirteen drew me a map of India from memory, marking the principal physical features with a fair amount of accuracy ; but when I asked her how she would go from London to Northampton, where her grandparents lived, and whether she might expect to pass Liverpool or Portsmouth on the way, she could only gape ; and although she must have repeated many hundreds of times, "England is an island," she had by no means grasped the fact that she would have to cross the water in order to reach France.

More women, especially married women who

have brought up a family of children on small means, ought to be in a position of authority with regard to elementary education. Then there would soon cease to be hard-and-fast rules, bearing equally on the mother who keeps her child away from school "to put money on a horse," or to "go coaling" (*i.e.* to follow up coal carts and pick and steal), or to visit the pawnshop, and the mother who occasionally keeps her twelve or thirteen years old daughter at home to instruct her in household duties. There would also be an end of all compulsory afternoon attendances of infants, and in bad weather liberal concessions would be made with regard to all children under eight. I knew an over-busy village schoolmaster who used to worry the mothers to send their children to him as soon as they could walk, although few of them would otherwise have attended until they were four, and five was a more generally approved of age, while some of the superior cottagers tried their best to postpone the attendance until six. When argument failed, he would offer the inducement: "If you will only let them come, I will not enter them at present on the register, and then you can keep them away on rainy days, and no questions will be asked."

Last winter a village school and Sunday school were closed for two months owing to an outbreak

of diphtheria. Some parents turned their children into drudges, and most allowed them to run wild from morning till night, not even dressing them properly on Sundays ; but one of the best mothers told me, with the deepest satisfaction : " Since the school was shut up I've got Gertie and Mary [aged 11½ and 13½] so nicely into work. I mean Mary to go to work directly she's fourteen, and service isn't the place to be learnt to work ; girls had ought to know how before ever they leave their home, and to be in the way of it, and to keep right on at it till it's finished. I get them up early in the morning, and they each have their share to do. Of course I let them play when it's done, and they enjoy it far more than if they had all the day to their selves."

A London woman, mother of several daughters who all went to service, told me that she found it practically impossible to get them to do any house work while at school. Her plan was to let them leave at fourteen, and she sat down for six months and made them do the cleaning and cooking while she sewed. She found it necessary to forbid any "going out to play," and they had to grow up suddenly. It was a rigorous system, and sometimes reinforced by the copper-stick, but it was crowned with success.

We spend a great deal of breath and money in

advocating thrift, and then build "model" dwellings without a single cupboard or a larder where food can be kept in a wholesome condition from one day to another, and with kitchen stoves that must not only be seen but wrestled with before either their extravagance or their temper-wearing qualities can be realised. I was telling one of the most economical women I have ever met, mother of a Council-school teacher and a trained servant, that I never allowed a dust-bin on my premises, and she said regretfully, "I have such a mis'ble poor stove that I can't save coal by burning the rubbish. Do what I may, it will only burn the best fuel."

Few but district nurses can estimate the amount of waste effort there is among the poor with regard to sick nursing and the care of young children, most of it arising from a mixture of ignorance and good-will. If there are two ways of doing a thing, the more laborious will almost certainly be chosen. The general course with regard to illness appears to be first neglect, then intemperate zeal, then slackness resulting from over-fatigue, then alarm and fresh excitement and exertion of such a wearing nature that I fully entered into the difficulties of a young nurse who told me how on arriving at one house she was quite unable to decide which was the person she had been called

in to attend. "There were five haggard-looking people in the room, and I was afraid to ask which it was. I temporised a little, and when I discovered a sixth person in bed, I thought I could not be wrong in fixing on her as the invalid, but this was a tactless blunder. My patient was slightly less ill than the others, and had in fact "got up from her bed to keep things going."

The poor generally are accused of laziness, but it is rather mental than physical. "Nous avons plus de paresse dans l'esprit que dans le corps," said La Rochefoucauld, and the text is of wide application. The working classes will make more rapid progress when they have learnt to set a higher price upon coarse drudgery and monotonous routine. Every district visitor knows how many chronic invalids—old, young, and middle-aged—are to be found in the homes of the respectable poor, and with what inexhaustible indulgence and long-practised skill most of them are treated, but few persons indeed have any conception to what an extent their present helpless condition was preventable in the early stages of the disease.

That prevention is better than cure is what no uneducated person can ever be made to believe. Parents will heroically and uncomplainingly nurse their elder children through typhoid fever and (unhappily, with less success) their little ones with

scarlatina and diphtheria, but it is utterly impossible to get them to protest in due time and in the right quarter against the disgraceful sanitary accommodation at the workshop, or against the known fact that several of their neighbours are sending some of their children to school "to be out of the way" of those who are already ill, nominally with bad colds, but in reality with infectious disorders of a serious nature. I can induce women to scrub their sinks clean, and the poorest will spend money on carbolic to smother the sickening odour arising from the open pipe, but to get them to understand the drainage and to see that the trap exists and is kept in order is a different matter. They will feed a cat, spending money on milk and meat that they can ill afford, but they will not starve the mice out by securely shutting up all food and keeping table and floor free from crumbs. When the fear is of rats, I have every sympathy with this faith in cats. I have known many outwardly decent and well-kept dwellings where without the cherished Tibby even grown men would be attacked in their sleep, while invalids and young children could not safely be left alone at any hour of night or day.

Few mothers even believe in the literal "stitch in time." It is far too much trouble to thread a needle and mend a hole that is scarcely visible :

it is a mere matter of course to sit up a couple of hours later than usual "making the poor child decent for school" when the neglected tear has become a rent threatening the very existence of the garment.

A large proportion of our efforts to improve the condition of the poor are doomed to failure just so long as we persist in devoting them almost exclusively to the young, a course of action which is like continually planting seeds without the slightest reference to their immediate surroundings, or the smallest care for plants already rooted and showing good promise of growth. No doubt it would be undesirable to throw further educational burdens on the State, but this does not affect the fact that nearly all private and voluntary attempts at teaching are devoted to the young, and but little interest is taken in the considerable numbers of totally ignorant men and women who have the will and the capacity to learn if even a tenth part of the trouble were bestowed on them which is lavished on heedless childhood. Wherever a real teacher appears, adult pupils are always to be found, though they may need much encouragement at first. They have so often heard the recommendation, "Learn while you're young," that with pardonable want of logic they conclude that it is impossible to learn at any other period, and

crush the inward desire for knowledge as an untimely craving, heaving many a sigh over "having been took away from school just as I was beginning to see the good of it." The belief that one must learn young or not at all is so deeply rooted that fairly intelligent women of forty, and even considerably less, can with difficulty be persuaded that it is possible for them to learn more of cooking or fine laundry work or a new branch of needlework. The exclusive care given to the education of the young has an unpleasant effect upon their character; with the natural conceit of childhood, fostered by their untaught parents' generous admiration of their little accomplishments, they incline to think their seniors not merely ignorant but incapable. I remember a little girl of ten who was simply astounded when her mother, a woman of over fifty, after a single lesson in knitting produced in two hours a strip as good in quality and far larger in amount than the children of her "standard." Men are more easily induced to believe in their latent powers and have more leisure, but from a strictly domestic point of view it is the continued education of the women which is of most importance.

The waste effort due to lack of organisation and regular intercourse between members of all agencies intended to ameliorate the condition of

the poor is simply incalculable. Philanthropists call the poor and suffering their brothers, but until they extend the same charity to all who are working for the same cause, time and money must alike be squandered. My personal experience has lain chiefly among the waste caused by lack of close co-ordination among medical charities. As a ward sister I wondered, powerlessly, what became of the man whose leg had been badly broken only three weeks previously when he was discharged to make room for a more urgent—or more “interesting”—case, or of the incurable sufferer gently persuaded that he would be “more comfortable at home.” I recollect one raw December day when a homeless man was discharged. He had barely recovered from pneumonia, and when his clothes were brought him, dry and discoloured from the high temperature to which it had been a crying necessity to subject them, I saw that they were hardly sufficient even for a man in sound health. There was nothing in my store cupboard but women’s shawls and children’s shoes, and I appealed to the house surgeon, a most zealous worker, to give me an old coat. I had never known a professional man who would not part with one—under pressure. His eyebrows went in one direction, the corners of his mouth in another. “I’d do it gladly, sister,

but the fact is that this," glancing at the coat he was wearing, "is the only one I possess. You know I don't get anything here but the run of my teeth, and it's rather a drain on my people. They expected me to find paying work at once."

Of course the patient ought to have been compelled to enter the workhouse until his health was restored, and equally of course there was no one empowered to put any pressure on him. He wandered listlessly into the foggy, frozen streets, and we saw him no more. The dressings alone for his successor, at wholesale rates, cost 10s. a day, and most of us knew that they might have been applied to the iron bars of the bed with as reasonable a hope of affecting their composition as that of his poisoned body.

As a district nurse I learnt what becomes of some of the discharged patients. One of my earliest experiences was of finding a woman paralysed, speechless, with frightful bedsores, returned at a few hours' notice to a home where the only person to receive her was the husband whose brutality was said to have caused the illness, and who, in any case, was a rough, ignorant labourer, and absent from the house for at least ten hours a day.

Expensive mechanical supports are provided for children ; who sees that these patients have nourish-

ing food and suitable exercise, or that the appliances are regularly worn and lengthened or otherwise altered as need arises? Spectacles are given, but whose business is it to see that the children's sight is tested from time to time, and the glasses changed if necessary? Patients are temporarily dismissed from the hospital where they have been kept for many weeks at great expense, with stringent orders to return after a fixed interval or when a certain well-defined change takes place. Who advises the friends on these points? I know an instance where a child's foot, owing to a parental blunder, was left three months immovably fixed in plaster of Paris, and permanent crippling of an acutely painful nature was the result.

In educational matters we are beginning to recognise the advantage of widespread organisation, but in our charitable undertakings we are still irresponsible and jealous amateurs, and unbridled individualists. "Egoism forbids co-operation," says a Japanese moralist, "and without co-operation no great achievement is possible." People love to speculate in charity as in other things, and are always hoping that their chance-directed sixpence will save a body, or at least a soul.

Few wrongs done by the rich to the poor equal

the mischief caused by their dilettante charities. When these are of a merely spasmodic and occasional nature, the results are bad enough ; but they can be resolutely stamped out like sparks which might otherwise destroy half a parish. The real mischief is done when, though entirely lacking in "grace to persevere" and abandoning their attempts long before they have learnt any serious lessons from the resulting experience, they have, nevertheless, so much sense of method and order that their plans, instead of being abandoned, are passed on to paid (possibly underpaid) hands, and become in a most undesirable sense "a self-reviving thing of power," able to draw subscriptions from the entire kingdom, in addition to gifts from colonial and American sympathisers. Doubtless there are persons born with the capacity for active philanthropy just as others are born with histrionic, literary, or artistic powers ; but while the actor or the poet who disdains even the minimum of study and training has to bear the personal penalty of ridicule or neglect, the peripatetic lover of his kind may not be even dimly conscious of the dismal harvest that the poor are reaping from the far-flung wild oats of his daring and obstinate inexperience.

Without a certificate of capacity we may not teach the three R's to children of six years old, and

almost every form of human activity is gradually becoming hedged in by precautions and restrictions designed to save the general public from rash and ignorant tampering with their vital interests. When shall we have a Licenser of Charities? In the meantime, how few of us could bear to face the belief that some day we shall fall into the relentless hands of Mrs. Be-done-by-as-you-did; that as Orphans we shall have to pace the streets two and two, a hundred at a time, dressed in yellow poke bonnets and low-strapped shoes, and with our elbows glued to our ribs by scanty green-checked dolmans; or be exposed to soul-searing publicity as Foundlings; or fed on an unvarying diet of soup and lukewarm suet pudding while one of our subsidised parents lies in bed and the other stupefies himself at the public-house; or that as child-emigrants we shall be robbed of home and country at the age of ten; or swept into barracks and remembered—collectively—twice a year, if we dare to be crippled or diseased without the extenuating circumstance of a private income, or of parents who would work day and night to save us from such a death in life; or endure any other of the ill-considered schemes which, glowing with fervent good-will, we have thrust upon the weak and helpless?

XIV

REMEDIES FOR EXISTING EVILS

If one ventures to utter the word practical with reference to any proposed remedy for an existing evil, the prejudice is instantly aroused that some short-sighted, hand-to-mouth method is designed which will inevitably result in creating infinitely more misery than it relieves. If, on the other hand, it is possible to protest, "Pure theory!" one's schemes are rejected as visionary.

This is mere playing with words. No remedy is really practical unless it aims at prevention. It is impossible to prevent an evil without knowing its cause or causes, and no analysis of causes which omits known tendencies of the normal human mind has been carried far enough.

At the present day some of the greatest evils among the poorest classes are the low level of general health, the loss of presumably valuable infant life and of adults while the full responsibility of parenthood is still resting on them, the injury

done to large numbers of children and young people by the ignorant treatment they receive and the general lack of rational home discipline; bad housing, the existence of many thousands of unemployed or very irregularly employed men, and the wretchedly inadequate pay of most working women and girls.

Take any one of these evils and examine into its causes, and we are inevitably led back to things of the mind.

Why do men become tramps, for instance? There is a popular idea that they find the life enjoyable. I lived for eight years on a high road swarming with them, and, as far as my eyesight could reach, I distinguished the sullen, hopeless gait of a genuine tramp, the more footsore and irregular one of the traveller, from that of even the most fatigued and dispirited day labourer returning to the least satisfactory of homes. Omitting cases of exceptional misfortune (and even these are usually combined with some grave lack of judgment), men generally become tramps because they are below the average in intellect, or because of too early and complete emancipation from home and school discipline, or because of their own and their parents' short-sightedness.

How is it possible to pay women such wretched wages? Because they have to compete against

married women and against girls partly supported by their parents, and these compete against them to the detriment of themselves, their children, their homes, and ultimately of their fathers, husbands, and brothers, because they do not understand what they are doing. And the thoughtless rich add not inconsiderably to the severity of the competition. Some years ago, a draper in a wealthy suburb showed me a beaded trimming, most of which he said was made for him locally at three-pence a yard. Knowing fairly well the length of time that the work would take, I asked how he thought it possible for anyone to live on such a pittance. The explanation was worthy of a comic opera : "Oh, ladies do a great part of it, and give the money in charity." Another cause, also a mental one, for the low wages of women is the unchecked unwillingness of girls to submit to the discipline and temporary sacrifice of learning a skilled trade.

Children are destroyed, maimed, enfeebled in mind and body for lack of proper food, clothing, cleanliness, and house-room. Is poverty the only, or even chief, cause ? In a large proportion of cases they are simply suffering from unsuitable food and clothing ; the amount of money spent on both was ample, but misdirected. Many children have died from cold, or contracted diseases which will handicap

them as long as they live, who wore plush coats and feathered hats and lace collars and kid boots ; and many more have had their health undermined by bad feeding, whose food, nevertheless, cost double what would have been necessary to provide plain, wholesome, and sufficiently appetising and varied nourishment. I knew three young mothers in a country village who were all unable to nurse their children, boys between five and eight months old. The first gave her child twelve ounces of milk, costing a fraction over a halfpenny a day, and was scrupulously careful as to its quality and temperature. The second bought a patent food at a cost of three and twopence a week, mixing it to a paste with water. The third had milk "by the quart," and fed the baby whenever it cried. Number one thrived ; number two was pining away when his father lost his work for a couple of months, and the bonny little lad was saved by the unwilling and sorely lamented economy of plain milk ; number three saved himself by refusing steadfastly to imbibe more than about twice as much as he needed.

The housing of the poor is disgracefully bad, and often the matter is beyond their individual control, but have they any idea of the importance of securing air and light and space in their dwellings ? have they even been taught to make the best of their homes as they are ? In many three-roomed

flats I find the largest and lightest room entirely devoted to show, rarely opened except to be cleaned, often locked for fear the children should enter it even for five minutes. If there is a well-lighted front kitchen and a gloomy wash-house, intended just as a place to perform the roughest and dirtiest and noisiest part of the work, the whole family will squeeze into the latter, and spend as much time there as possible.

Nearly every evil that can be brought forward arises from mistaken ideas, and persists on account of their prevalence ; and every remedy worthy of the name must aim at improving the individual, raising his value as a social unit. People may not receive all the good that they deserve, but in the long-run no human institution can secure that they shall have, and continue to have, more than they are worth. If a woman is nervous, yielding, anaemic, untrained, feeble in mind and body, she can earn very little, and will probably receive less still ; if she marries, her labours as a wife and mother will be poor in results for her family and terribly costly for herself. If a man is below the average in health, intellect, moral discipline, and domestic sentiment, he is practically certain to fall into the ranks of casual labour, and in more extreme cases he will become a hopeless burden on the community. Neither Conservatives, Radicals, nor

Reactionists can prevent these things from happening. There is no political panacea : free trade, fair trade, protection, retaliation, will not affect them. Improve individuals, and the State which they compose must also be improved ; but without this mental and inward change every system of government is more or less a failure. "The end which statesmen should keep in view as higher than all other ends is the formation of character," said Spencer. Not only is this the highest end, but the sole means by which the conditions of life can be essentially and permanently improved.

Out of good bricks a substantial building can be made, but if even one-twentieth of them be crumbling and imperfect, no safe structure can be raised, and the more elaborate the design the more numerous the weak points must be.

In order to improve the individual we must first ensure that he has been born uninjured and vigorous, that he receives constant personal care during the first twelve years of his life, and much guidance, supervision, and control during the subsequent eight or ten.

How can he obtain all this ? Not to any great extent by Act of Parliament, or direct State interference of any kind, but chiefly by the improvement of home life and the expansion of parental ideals.

Instead of asking ceaselessly for more legislation,

more collective powers, let us take stock of what we have already, and ask to what extent we are benefited by them. Instead of hastily bringing fresh organisations into existence, and trusting blindly to them for a quarter of a century, or else pulling them up by the roots the day after to-morrow, let us consider those already in activity, and find out on the one hand whether we are checking the evil or mistaken tendencies that lie hidden in all human designs ; and, on the other hand, whether we are getting the utmost possible amount of good out of them.

Take compulsory elementary education, for example. In a very short time all children under fourteen years of age will spend five days a week for about nine and a half months a year at school. Is the best practicable use made of the whole of this period ? Do we not in many ways allow ourselves to be hampered by the fact that when the "codes" were first drawn up elementary education commonly came to an end at ten or eleven ? Average working-class children suffer not only because their studies leave off too soon but because they begin too soon, and are not graduated with sufficient knowledge of the ordinary lines upon which mental powers develop. The mentally precocious child belongs almost exclusively to the middle and professional classes ; the poor and the rich develop more slowly. Much precious time is

wasted in laboriously teaching pupils of seven or eight things that would have been almost self-evident to a child of eleven whose intelligence had been occupied in the meantime with matters far more easily grasped. The same mistake was formerly made with the children of the rich. Boys of six and even five were tormented with Latin grammar, still younger girls cried and struggled over music lessons, and at twelve they were easily distanced in these subjects by pupils who had studied them for a few months. Needless to say, the brains of the successful competitors had not been allowed to lie entirely fallow, or left a prey to dreams and whimsies, but they had been employed chiefly on matters where memory counts for a great deal, and their intelligence had been exercised but not strained; above all, they had never become accustomed to work in a fog. In all codes and regulations affecting national education far too much weight has been allowed to the opinion of men belonging entirely to the professional class, knowing no children but those of their own class—and very little even of those during the first half or even two-thirds of their childhood. The extension of the system of continuation schools is much to be desired. They are needed not merely for the purpose of teaching new and more advanced subjects, but to prevent what has already been

learnt from being forgotten. It is possible to teach moderately intelligent children a very great deal of what is necessary for their welfare and advancement, but it is not possible to make them remember all this, nor even to ensure the remembrance of what may be considered an irreducible minimum of instruction, if they leave school at the age of thirteen or fourteen, and divide their time henceforth between physical drudgery and complete idleness spent in entirely unintellectual surroundings. Moreover, many of the most ignorant among the poor are persons who were not naturally defective but of retarded development, and education carried over a longer period would have made all the difference in the world to them.

Everywhere one finds parents willing and even anxious to keep clever, quick-witted children at school, but few of them "see the use of" prolonged teaching for the dullards. What would become of many middle-class children, especially boys, if all direct instruction ceased at fourteen or even earlier? I will not say that all opportunity of learning comes to an end in childhood even among the poorest, but bare "opportunity" is merely a handle for genius, and has never been lacking under any system of social life.

What we need is that rank-and-file brains should

meet with a proper amount of care and consideration. Even if raising the common school standard meant the loss of a genius here and there for the want of special fostering, would it matter very much when we had so greatly reduced the need for giants in the land? All the truly great men of the world are chiefly occupied in fighting the battles of those who have been allowed to remain below what is a safe or pleasant position for human beings to occupy.

One reason why compulsory education has not worked as great a reform as it might have done in over thirty years is because the majority of the teachers are insufficiently acquainted with the daily lives of the ordinary pupils. Most of them come from the aristocracy of the poor and have lived in the extremest retirement and isolation. Neither from early personal experience nor by sympathetic study do they know the principal class with which they have to deal.

Another reason for comparative failure is that the moral origin of a large amount of stupidity is not sufficiently recognised at the present day. Old schoolmasters who declared that memory and understanding waited upon attention, and that attention was within the power of all their pupils, were not so far from the truth as modern teachers seem to think. To satisfy oneself of the insufficient

moral teaching assimilated (even if given), it is only necessary to informally examine twenty or more Council-school children by telling them some story of daily life and asking their opinion as to whether the actors were right or wrong, or lay an imaginary case before them and inquire what they themselves would think it their duty to do in such circumstances. Not only will fully half of the children be unable to reply correctly, but those who give right answers will probably supply ludicrously wrong or inadequate reasons for their decision—this last a matter of no immediate moment, but which must become of practical importance as soon as other and perhaps quicker-witted children look to them for guidance.

Very often it is not more instruction that the poor require, but some motive for action. It is rare indeed to find persons of any age, or any position in life, who make a practical use of all their knowledge. If we look back with anything like clear memory to our own childhood, we shall acknowledge that there was a great gap between knowledge and action, between believing a dogma and doing anything because we believed it. It is in order to bridge this gap that personal influence may be of so much value and that religious teaching is in the fullest sense practical.

In the worst neighbourhood I ever visited,

several women on separate occasions told me in almost precisely the same words : " Ah, there's many a thing done here that wouldn't be done if the clergy came among us more." But visit among them was exactly what the clergy would not do. It is almost incredible, but to get dying patients visited by the ministers whom they earnestly desired to see was often more than I could accomplish. They preferred multiplying services. Services of whom ? As a differently minded priest remarked, " If the church bells are always ringing, and their coat tails flying round the corners to be there in time, they think they have done their duty by the parish." And another, exalting the duty of parochial visiting above that of holding week-day services in empty churches, said, " Unless I know my parishioners when they are well, how can I expect them to care to see me when they are ill ? And if my opinion is not worth having on the points of pigs and cabbages, how can I expect to have it accepted with regard to the education of their children ? " I remember a large and elaborately decorated church in a parish containing two thousand villa residents and their servants, about one hundred small shopkeepers and their families, and about fifteen hundred of the labouring classes, nearly half of whom were very poor. A daily service was

held at that church, but in order to ensure the attendance of even three persons, a coterie of some twenty ladies took it in turns to go. One day an outsider, too rheumatic to attend a prolonged service, entered the church, and although it was several minutes past the appointed hour, found no one present but the vicar. Just as he came out from the vestry and knelt down she discovered that she had forgotten her spectacles, and although she knew she could repeat the responses by heart, she was seized with a nervous panic when she recollect ed that she would be expected to read alternate verses of the psalms. Also, she was a clergyman's daughter, and, as she expressed it frankly, "I knew what a rage my father would have been in if he had had to read matins for one old person." Before the vicar rose to his feet the congregation had fled. In the porch she met one of the regular attendants just arriving, and astounded her by the breathless question, "Can you read? I can't. That's all right, then," and returned to her seat. In this same parish a district visitor asked the vicar to call upon a poor woman who anxiously waited to see him and who was believed to be in a dying condition. Four weeks after he met the district visitor. "Oh, ah, Mrs. Wyvern, I—ah—lost the address of that poor soul you mentioned. Is she—ah?"

"Much better, and gone to a convalescent home," was the pardonably impatient reply.

I once read that the poor in the country, at any rate, can always have "air, water, and the parson's advice." It seemed a scanty allowance, but after living in certain rural districts I came to the conclusion that in cottages these are the things most often lacking. Inside the houses there was no room for air, immediately outside them it was poisoned, the nearest wholesome water-supply was often half a mile away; and how frequently I longed to meet the masterful landlord of fiction or the pragmatic parson and his interfering wife!

If I told the vicar a few of the facts that inevitably came to my knowledge: that gambling of a ruinous kind was carried on in such and such a house, or heavy secret drinking in another; if I told his wife that certain girls were old enough for domestic service, and were becoming anaemic from overcrowding, poor food, and idleness, and that their mothers were willing to let them go but not anxious, what happened? Nothing—nothing at all.

In dealing with the most uneducated classes the power and value, and indeed the mental necessity, of constant repetition of one's teaching cannot well be over-stated. Repetition is not, as

to more nervous and intellectual types, either a weariness or a goad in the wrong direction. It is soothing, and without it there is no such thing as certainty. Not only is it valuable in the mouth of doctor, nurse, minister, or whoever may be the teacher, but it is specially impressive if the same statements can be repeated by different persons. For this reason co-operation between all workers among the poor is imperative. When, for example, I wished to induce the friends to allow a consumptive patient to have sole possession of one room, and to let her confine herself to that room except when well enough to go out of doors, I was usually told that it was unnecessary or that it was impracticable. The next step was to find the minister of the denomination to which the sufferer belonged, and induce him to repeat the advice; it was then put into the mouths of district visitor, deaconess, or church sister, and one of them was asked to leave some simple leaflet on the subject of consumption, or a magazine in which the matter was incidentally treated; finally, the "useful neighbour," confidential friend and adviser of the family was discovered and instructed.

After allowing time for all this, I returned to the charge, and the victims of my innocent plot would say, with a sigh of resignation, "Well, I suppose

it had ought to be so. It's juss what the vicar bin a-saying, and Miss B——, and Mrs. Thomson from over the way." After that, though many a conversational hill and dale had to be crossed, no real difficulty remained.

To ameliorate the condition of the very poorest and most ignorant it is not sufficient that we should be armed with the principles of philosophers. We need some of the methods of quacks : bold and clear assertion, ceaseless and unblushing repetition.

On account of class feeling, the friendly neighbour is always the most important ally, and there are few depths of flattery to which I would not descend in order to secure her vigorous co-operation. The strength of class prejudice, not in the sense of malignancy, but with regard to suspicion and distrust, can only be realised by those who have spent much time among the poor and are unwearied listeners. The following is by no means an extreme instance, although, as I knew all the parties concerned, it struck me forcibly at the time. A country lad of sixteen lived "with the gentry." His mother had never been in service herself, but she had received countless kindnesses from her son's employers, and had much cause to know that they were not only just and reasonable in their treatment of dependents, but unusually kind and considerate. Nevertheless, she listened to and

encouraged the most trivial and childish complaints. His brother of fourteen, her favourite child, took a situation at a small public-house, and shared the room of an habitual drunkard who lodged there. It was this man's duty to get up at two o'clock every morning and do an hour's work with a cart and horse. He was often too stupid with drink to be roused, and, after vainly trying to wake him, this mere child, who had been on duty from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. or even 11, would go out to the street and do it himself, "so's Jim shan't lose his job." The mother knew all this, and never stirred a finger to prevent it. "Hard work don't never hurt 'em. It's the *treatment* I looks to," was her sole comment. Probably the intensity and selfishness of class feeling is reduced of late years in the same ratio as the brutality of its outward expression. I have been told by a gentleman farmer born about the year 1830 that as a lad he often heard and drank to the toast, "Here's to a bloody war and a bad harvest."

Above all things, we must never lose sight of the continuity of life. Apparently forgetting the context, but with more desire to make a sound social use of religious teaching than is commonly shown, someone asked me recently, "Is it because St. Paul was a bachelor that he talked so lightly of legislating 'for the present distress' ? People

with children and grandchildren cannot afford to take short views."

No conceivable development of the philanthropic spirit among the upper classes could affect the condition of the poor to an extent comparable to the revolution that would take place in their whole method of thought and action if the spirit of fatalism and blind submission, chequered by barren revolt, were displaced by the intellectual ability to trace cause and effect in even the simplest cases. Many among the least educated show signs of considerable intellectuality, but how deficient the poor as a whole are, and are allowed to remain, in the art of reasoning, only those intimately acquainted with their mental processes can even faintly realise. Grown men and women, after all the education brought to them by fifty years of life, have often in sad and sober earnestness offered me "reasons" which if they came from a child of seven or eight would probably be met by the reply, "Don't be so foolish!" The power to turn the attention to the essential points of the matter in hand is generally defective or absent, and the practical training of life often fails to supply it owing to the lack of leading principles to which experience may be referred. We hear of "using your eyes," "keeping your wits about you," and so forth, but as the artist, for one, knows very well,

people *cannot* see until they have been taught to see. All through one winter I gave theoretical instruction to two women (separately) who had had practical knowledge of the matter for quite twenty years before I had ever heard of it. At first when I told them that this or that thing could be observed in certain circumstances, they rarely failed to assure me that "in all their born days" they had never known it happen. Later on they told me, with intense surprise, that these things "were now beginning to happen," but the older and more prejudiced of the two added firmly, "I'm sure the like of it never come to me before."

Probably one of the best means of supplying the poor with most necessary parts of education would be direct taxation, and it is certainly one of the most practical remedies for extravagant local administration. In a thinly populated parish covering a large area a young girl said to me, "We'd ought to have lamps in the village." "Do you wish the rates to go up?" "Oh no; mother's got 11s. rates to pay at Lady Day as 'tis," and she quickly mentioned a few things which, in her mother's opinion, had been done in the parish unnecessarily, or at an unreasonable cost. Another cottager who paid 6s. for the entire year delivered lectures to tramps if they knocked at her door. Women farther down the hill paid rent, rates, and

taxes all in one, without the faintest idea how much they paid for each, and most of them encouraged tramps to the full extent of their ability.

Education can alone supply the remedies for all existing evils, but the ruling classes have a double duty with regard to the matter : first, to give an education which is a real preparation for life ; and, secondly, to avoid hasty interposition between the stern experiences of life and those who have strength and wit enough to profit by them. And all school teachers would do well to recall Adam Smith's dictum : "The great secret of education is to direct vanity to proper objects."

Perhaps one of the greatest needs of the present day is that working-women should receive decent wages, and it would be well if all those desirous of helping them began by accepting two elementary facts and their implications : firstly, that women will never receive good wages until they can earn them ; and, secondly, that if they could earn them, society as a whole would be enormously benefited. Matrimony cannot support all women, still less can it support all women at all periods of their life. Working-class girls between seventeen and twenty-four are practically bound to earn their own living, and whether that living is liberal or intolerably meagre is a question not only affecting themselves but the children who will be born to them, and

it unmistakably affects the level of social morality in one of its most important points. Young and middle-aged widows will always abound, and although among the poorer classes they commonly marry again, there will certainly be an interval of a year or more during which they must depend upon their own exertions; and bad housing and semi-starvation during that period will injure either health or morals, or both. Even if the first marriage lasts for thirty or more years, it must still be remembered that the average woman lives two years longer than the average man, and that she is usually from one to five years younger than her husband, while pensions from all sources and even almshouse allowances generally cease at his death, and outdoor relief is diminished by one half instead of the third which would be reasonable, considering that the same amount of rent must still be paid. How are all these blank periods to be filled in if a woman, at her best, has difficulty in earning eight or ten shillings a week in the open market?

It is no hardship for a woman to earn her living if she is properly prepared to do it; the real burden is that in all classes of life it is so often a case of bricks without straw, whether mental or physical work be in question. Even when all that is demanded of widow or spinster is that she should

"look after what she has," how often have parents and guardians forearmed her with the necessary business knowledge? I remember hearing the sympathetic wife of a wealthy man call on him to pity certain women who had been ruined by placing their father's savings in the hands of a dishonest speculator. "Greedy old things, serve 'em right!" was his ultra-masculine reply. "They must have known that the interest he offered them could not be got honestly by people who had nothing to contribute but their money. If you can't work, and can't afford to take a risk, and haven't any brains, two and a half per cent. is a fair price."

The victims certainly ought to have known this, but did they know it?

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THE END

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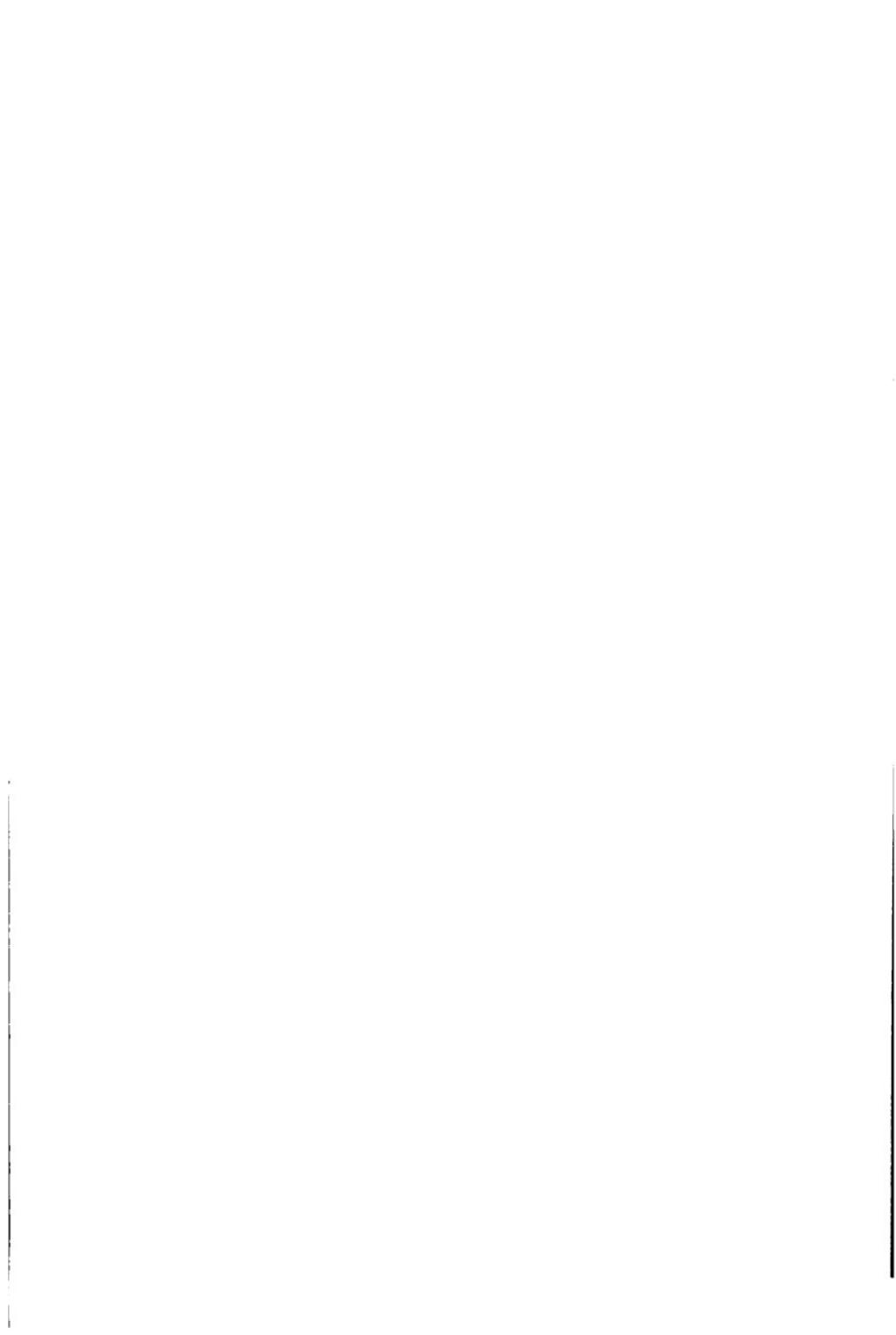
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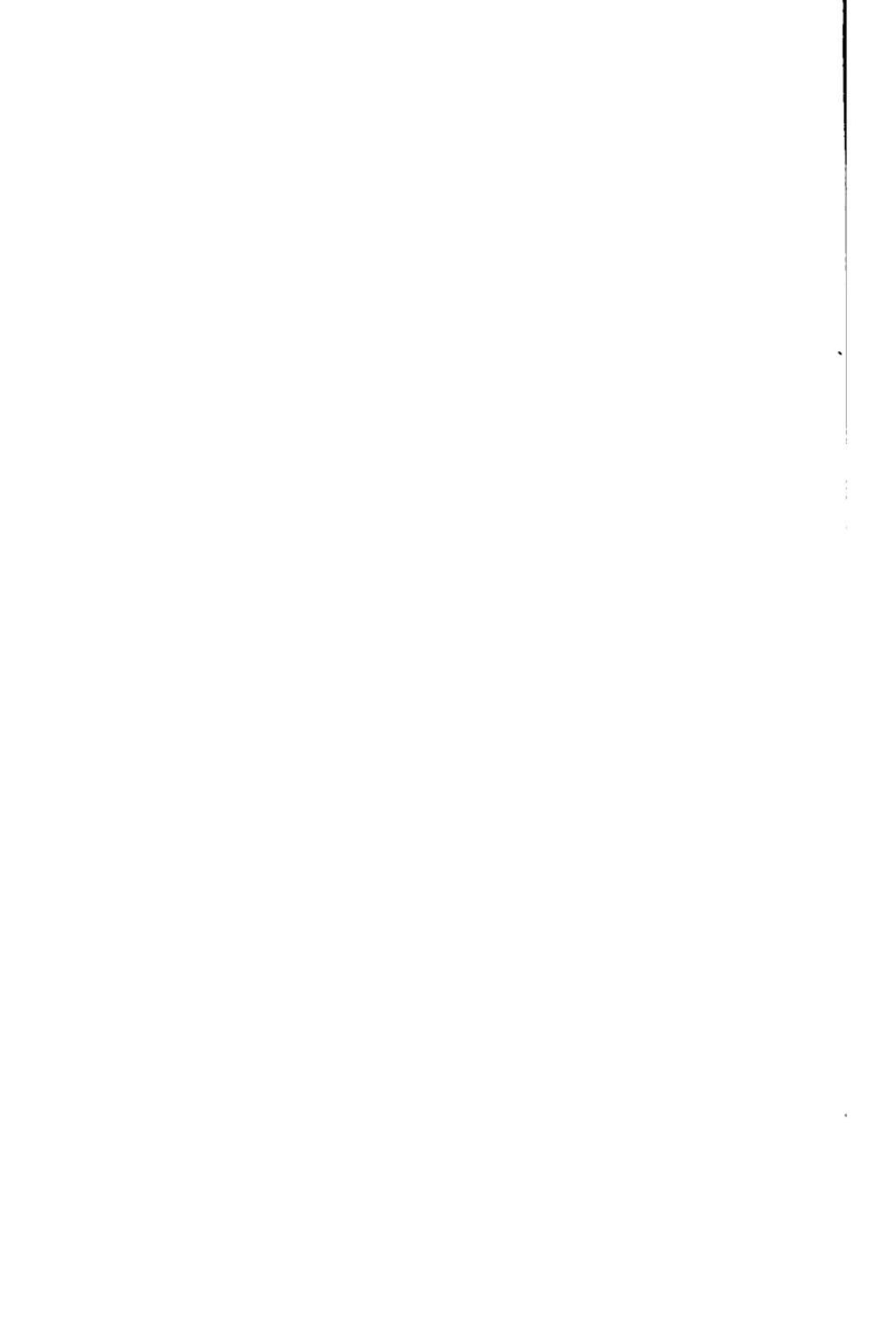
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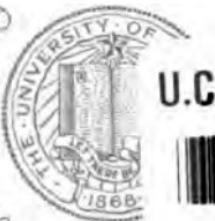
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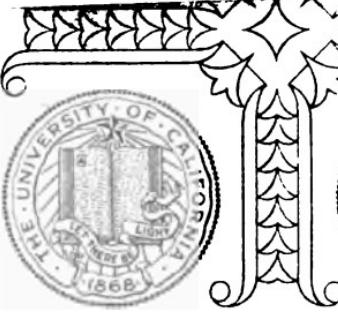
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